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MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"JAPHET, IN SEARCH OF A FATHER," "PETER SIMPLE,"

"JACOB FAITHFUL," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY.

CHAPTER I.

In which Jack's cruise is ended, and he regains the Harpy.

A FEW more days passed, and, as was expected, the mutineers could hold out no longer. In the first place, they had put in the spile of the second cask of wine so loosely when they were tipsy, that it dropped out, and all the wine ran out, so that there had been none left for three or four days; in the next, their fuel had long been expended, and they had latterly eaten

their meat raw: the loss of their tent, which had been fired by their carelessness, had been followed by four days and nights of continual rain. Every thing they had, had been soaked through and through, and they were worn out, shivering with cold, and starving. Hanging they thought better than dying by inches from starvation; and, yielding to the imperious demands of hunger, they came down to the beach, abreast of the ship, and dropped down on their knees.

"I tell you so, Massa Easy," said Mesty: "d—n rascals, they forget they come down fire musket at us every day: by all de powers, Mesty not forget it."

"Ship a hoy," cried one of the men on shore.

"What do you want?" replied Jack.

"Have pity on us, sir—mercy!" exclaimed the other men, "we will return to our duty."

"Debbel doubt em!"

"What shall I say, Mesty?"

"Tell em no, first, Massa Easy—tell em to starve and be d—d."

"I cannot take mutineers on board," replied Jack.

"Well, then, our blood be on your hands, Mr. Easy," replied the first man who had spoken. "If we are to die, it must not be by inches—if you will not take us, the sharks shall—it is but a crunch, and all is over. What do you say, my lads? let's all rush in together: good-bye, Mr. Easy, I hope you'll forgive us when we're dead: it was all that rascal Johnson, the coxswain, who persuaded us. Come, my lads, it's no use thinking of it, the sooner done the better—let us shake hands, and then make one run of it."

It appeared that the poor fellows had already made up their minds to do this, if our hero, persuaded by Mesty, had refused to take them on board—they shook hands all round, and then

walking a few yards from the beach, stood in a line while the man gave the signal—one—two.

"Stop," cried Jack, who had not forgotten the dreadful scene which had already taken place, —"stop."

The men paused.

"What will you promise if I take you on board?"

"To do our duty cheerfully till we join the ship, and then be hung as an example to all mutineers," replied the men.

"Dat very fair," replied Mesty; "take dem at their word, Massa Easy."

"Very well," replied Jack, "I accept your conditions; and we will come for you."

Jack and Mesty hauled up the boat, stuck their pistols in their belts, and pulled to the shore. The men, as they stepped in, touched their hats respectfully to our hero, but said nothing. On their arrival on board, Jack read

that part of the articles of war relative to mutiny, by which the men were reminded of the very satisfactory fact, " that they were to suffer death;" and then made a speech which, to men who were starving, appeared to be interminable. However, there is an end to every thing in this world, and so there was to Jack's harangue; after which Mesty gave them some biscuit which they devoured in thankfulness, until they could get something better. The next morning the wind was fair, they weighed their kedge with some difficulty, and ran out of the harbour: the men appeared very contrite, worked well but in silence, for they had no very pleasant anticipations, but hope always remains with us; and each of the men, although he had no doubt but that the others would be hung, hoped that he would escape with a sound flogging. The wind however did not allow them to steer their course long; before night it was contrary, and they fell

off three points to the northward. "However," as Jack observed, "At all events we shall make the Spanish coast, and then we must run down it to Gibraltar: I don't care—I understand navigation much better than I did. The next morning they found themselves, with a very light breeze, under a high cape, and, as the sun rose, they observed a large vessel on shore, about two miles to the westward of them, and another outside, about four miles off. Mesty took the glass and examined the one outside, which, on a sudden, had let fall all her canvass, and was now running for the shore, steering for the cape under which Jack's vessel lay. Mesty put down the glass.

"Massa Easy—I tink dat de Harpy."

One of the seamen took the glass and examined her, while the others who stood by showed great agitation.

"Yes, it is the Harpy," said the seaman.

"Oh Mr. Easy, will you forgive us?" continued the man, and he and the others fell on their knees. "Do not tell all, for God's sake, Mr. Easy."

Jack's heart melted; he looked at Mesty.

"I tink," said Mesty, apart to our hero, "dat with what them hab suffer already, suppose they get *seven dozen a piece*, dat quite enough."

Jack thought that even half that punishment would suffice; so he told the men, that although he must state what had occurred, he would not tell all, and would contrive to get them off as well as he could. He was about to make a long speech, but a gun from the Harpy, which had now come up within range, made him defer it till a more convenient opportunity. At the same time the vessel in shore hoisted Spanish colours, and fired a gun.

"By de powers but we got in the middle of

it," cried Mesty; "Harpy tink us Spaniard. Now, my lads, get all gun ready, bring up powder and shot. Massa, now us fire at Spaniard—Harpy not fire at us—no ab English colours on board—dat all we must do."

The men set to with a will; the guns were all loaded, and were soon cast loose and primed, during which operations, it fell calm, and the sails of all three vessels flapped against their masts. The Harpy was then about two miles from Jack's vessel, and the Spaniard about a mile from him, with all her boats ahead of her towing towards him; Mesty examined the Spanish vessel.

"Dat man-o'-war, Massa Easy—what de debbel we do for colour? must hoist someting."

Mesty ran down below; he recollected that there was a very gay petticoat, which had been left by the old lady who was in the vessel when they captured her. It was of green silk with yellow and blue flowers, but very faded, having

probably been in the Don's family for a century. Mesty had found it under the mattrass of one of the beds, and had put it into his bag, intending probably to cut it up into waistcoats. He soon appeared with this under his arm, made it fast to the peak halyards and hoisted it up.

"Dere, massa, dat do very well—dat what you call *all nation colour*. Every body strike him flag to dat—men nebber pull it down," said Mesty, "any how. Now den, ab hoist colour, we fire away—mind you only fire one gun at a time, and point um well, den ab time to load again."

"She's hoisted her colours, sir," said Sawbridge, on board of the Harpy; "but they do not show out clear, and it's impossible to distinguish them; but there's a gun."

"It's not at us, sir," said Gascoigne, the midshipman; "it's at the Spanish vessel—I saw the shot fall ahead of her."

"It must be a privateer," said Captain Wilson; "at all events, it is very fortunate, for the corvette would otherwise have towed into Carthagena. Another gun, round and grape, and well pointed too; she carries heavy mettle, that craft: she must be a Maltese privateer."

"That's as much as to say that she's a pirate," replied Sawbridge; "I can make nothing of her colours—they appear to me to be green—she must be a Turk. Another gun—and devilish well aimed, it has hit the boats."

"Yes, they are all in confusion: we will have her now, if we can only get a trifle of wind. That is a breeze coming up in the offing. Trim the sails, Mr. Sawbridge."

The yards were squared, and the Harpy soon had steerage way. In the meantime Jack and his few men had kept up a steady well-directed, although slow, fire with their larboard guns upon the Spanish corvette; and two of

her boats had been disabled. The Harpy brought the breeze up with her, and was soon within range; she steered to cut off the corvette, firing only her bow-chasers.

"We ab her now," cried Mesty, "fire away, men—take good aim. Breeze come now; one man go to helm. By de power what dat?"

The exclamation of Mesty was occasioned by a shot hulling the ship on the starboard side. Jack and he ran over, and perceived that three Spanish gun-boats had just made their appearance round the point, and had attacked them. The fact was, that on the other side of the Cape was the port and town of Carthagena, and these gun-boats had been sent out to the assistance of the corvette. The ship had now caught the breeze, fortunately for Jack, or he would probably have been taken into Carthagena; and the corvette, finding herself cut off by both the Harpy and Jack's vessel, as soon as the breeze

came up to her, put her head the other way, and tried to escape by running westward along the coast close in-shore. Another shot, and then another, pierced the hull of the ship, and wounded two of Jack's men; but as the corvette had turned, and the Harpy followed her, of course Jack did the same, and in ten minutes he was clear of the gun-boats, who did not venture to make sail and stand after him. The wind now freshened fast, and blew out the green petticoat, but the Harpy was exchanging broadsides with the corvette, and too busy to look after Jack's ensign. The Spaniard defended himself well, and had the assistance of the batteries as he passed, but there was no anchorage until he had run many miles farther. About noon, the wind died away, and at one o'clock it again fell nearly calm; but the Harpy had neared her distance, and was now within three cables' length of her antagonist, engaging

her and a battery of four guns. Jack came up again, for he had the last of the breeze, and was about half a mile from the corvette when it fell calm. By the advice of Mesty, he did not fire any more, as otherwise the Harpy would not obtain so much credit, and it was evident that the fire of the Spaniard slackened fast. At three o'clock the Spanish colours were hauled down, and the Harpy, sending a boat on board and taking possession, directed her whole fire upon the battery, which was soon silenced.

The calm continued, and the Harpy was busy enough with the prize, shifting the prisoners and refitting both vessels, which had very much suffered in the sails and rigging. There was an occasional wonder on board the Harpy what that strange vessel might be who had turned the corvette and enabled them to capture her, but when people are all very busy, there is not much time for surmise.

Jack's crew, with himself, consisted but of eight, one of which was a Spaniard, and two were wounded. It therefore left him but four, and he had also something to do, which was to assist his wounded men, and secure his guns. Moreover, Mesty did not think it prudent to leave the vessel a mile from the Harpy with only two on board; besides, as Jack said, he had had no dinner, and was not quite sure that be should find any thing to eat when he went into the midshipman's berth, he would therefore have some dinner cooked, and eat it before he went on board; in the mean time, they would try and close with her. Jack took things always very easy, and he said he should report himself at sun-set. There were other reasons which made Jack in no very great hurry to go on board; he wanted to have time to consider a little, what he should say to excuse himself, and also how he should plead for the men. His

natural correctness of feeling decided him, in the first place, to tell the whole truth, and in the next, his kind feelings determined him to tell only part of it. Jack need not have given himself this trouble, for as far as regarded himself, he had fourteen thousand good excuses in the bags which lay in the state room; and as for the men, after an action with the enemy, if they behave well, even mutiny is forgiven. At last, Jack, who was tired with excitement and the hard work of the day, thought and thought until he fell fast asleep, and instead of waking at sun-set, did not wake till two hours afterwards; and Mesty did not call him, because he was in no hurry himself to go on board and *boil de kettle for de young gentlemen.*

When Jack woke up, he was astonished to find that he had slept so long: he went on deck; it was dark and still calm, but he could easily perceive that the Harpy and corvette

were still hove to, repairing damages. He ordered the men to lower down the small boat, and leaving Mesty in charge, with two oars he pulled to the Harpy. What with wounded men, with prisoners, and boats going and coming between the vessels, every one on board the Harpy were well employed; and in the dark, Jack's little boat came alongside without notice. This should not have been the case, but it was, and there was some excuse for it. Jack ascended the side and pushed his way through the prisoners, who were being mustered to be victualled. He was wrapped up in one of the gregos, and many of the prisoners wore the same.

Jack was amused at not being recognised: he slipped down the main ladder, and had to stoop under the hammocks of the wounded men, and was about to go aft to the captain's cabin to report himself, when he heard young Gossett crying out, and the sound of the rope. "Hang

me, if that brute Vigors a'n't thrashing young Gossett," thought Jack. "I dare say the poor fellow has had plenty of it since I have been away; I'll save him this time at least." Jack, wrapped up in his grego, went to the window of the berth, looked in, and found it was as he expected. He cried out in an angry voice, "*Mr. Vigors, I'll thank you to leave Gossett alone.*" At the sound of the voice Vigors turned round with his colt in his hand, saw Jack's face at the window, and, impressed with the idea that the re-appearance was supernatural, uttered a yell and fell down in a fit—little Gossett also trembling in every limb, stared with his mouth open. Jack was satisfied, and immediately disappeared. He then went aft to the cabin, pushed by the servant, who was giving some orders from the captain to the officer on deck, and entering the cabin where the captain was seated with two Spanish officers, took off his hat and said,

"Come on board, Captain Wilson."

Captain Wilson did not fall down in a fit, but he jumped up and upset the glass before him.

"Merciful God, Mr. Easy, where did you come from?"

"From that ship astern, Sir," replied Jack.

"That ship astern! what is she?—where have you been so long?"

"It's a long story sir," replied Jack.

Captain Wilson extended his hand and shook Jack's heartily.

"At all events, I'm delighted to see you, boy: now sit down and tell me your story in a few words; we will have it in detail by-and-bye."

"If you please, sir," said Jack, "we captured that ship with the cutter the night after we went away—I'm not a first-rate navigator, and I was blown to the Zaffarine Islands, where I remained two months for want of hands: as soon as I procured them I made sail again—I have

lost three men by sharks, and I have two wounded in to-day's fight—the ship mounts twelve guns, is half laden with lead, and cotton prints, has fourteen thousand dollars in the cabin, and three shot-holes right through her—and the sooner you send some people on board of her the better."

This was not very intelligible, but that there were fourteen thousand dollars, and that she required hands sent on board, was very satisfactorily explained. Captain Wilson rang the bell, sent for Mr. Asper, who started back at the sight of our hero—desired him to order Mr. Jolliffe to go on board with one of the cutters, send the wounded men on board, and take charge of the vessel, and then told Jack to accompany Mr. Jolliffe, and to give him every information; telling him that he would hear his story to-morrow, when they were not so very busy.

CHAPTER II.

In which our hero finds out that trigonometry is not only necessary to navigation, but may be required in settling affairs of honour.

As Captain Wilson truly said, he was too busy, even to hear Jack's story that night, for they were anxious to have both vessels ready to make sail as soon as a breeze should spring up, for the Spaniards had vessels of war at Carthagena, which was not ten miles off, and had known the result of the action: it was therefore necessary to change their position as soon as possible. Mr. Sawbridge was on board the prize, which was a corvette mounting two guns

more than the Harpy, and called the Cacafuogo.

She had escaped from Cadiz, run through the straits in the night and was three miles from Carthagena when she was captured, which she certainly never would have been, but for Jack's fortunately blundering against the Cape with his armed vessel, so that Captain Wilson and Mr. Sawbridge, (both of whom were promoted, the first to the rank of post-captain, the second to that of commander,) may be said to be indebted to Jack for their good fortune. The Harpy had lost nineteen men, killed and wounded, and the Spanish corvette forty-seven. Altogether, it was a very creditable affair.

At two o'clock in the morning, the vessels were ready, every thing had been done that could be done, in so short a time, and they stood under easy sail during the night, for Gibraltar, the Nostra Signora del Carmen, under

the charge of Jolliffe, keeping company. Jolliffe had the advantage over his shipmates, of first hearing Jack's adventures, with which he was much astonished as well as amused—even Captain Wilson was not more happy to see Jack than was the worthy master's mate. About nine o'clock the Harpy hove to, and sent a boat on board for our hero, and the men who had been so long with him in the prize, and then hoisted out the pinnace to fetch on board the dollars, which were of more importance. Jack, as he bade adieu to Jolliffe, took out of his pocket, and presented him with the *articles of war*, which, as they had been so useful to him, he thought Jolliffe could not do without, and then went down the side: the men were already in the boat, casting imploring looks upon Jack, to raise feelings of compassion, and Mesty took his seat by our hero in a very sulky humour, probably because he did not like the idea of

having again "to boil de kettle for de young gentlemen." Even Jack felt a little melancholy at resigning his command, and he looked back at the green petticoat, which blew out gracefully from the mast, for Jolliffe had determined that he would not haul down the colours under which Jack had fought so gallant an action.

Jack's narration, as may be imagined, occupied a large part of the forenoon; and, although Jack did not attempt to deny that he had seen the recall signal of Mr. Sawbridge, yet, as his account went on, the captain became so interested, that at the end of it, he quite forgot to point out to Jack the impropriety of not obeying orders. He gave Jack great credit for his conduct, and was also much pleased with that of Mesty. Jack took the opportunity of stating Mesty's aversion to his present employment, and his recommendation was graciously received. Jack also succeeded in obtaining

the pardon of the men, in consideration of their subsequent good behaviour, but notwithstanding this promise on the part of Captain Wilson, they were ordered to be put in irons for the present. However, Jack told Mesty, and Mesty told the men, that they would be released with a reprimand when they arrived at Gibraltar, so all that the men cared for was a fair wind.

Captain Wilson informed Jack that after his joining the admiral he had been sent to Malta with the prizes, and that supposing the cutter to have been sunk, he had written to his father, acquainting him with his son's death, at which our hero was much grieved, for he knew what sorrow it would occasion, particularly to his poor mother. "But," thought Jack, "if she is unhappy for three months, she will be overjoyed for three more when she hears that I am alive, so it will be all square at the end of the six; and as soon as I arrive at Gibraltar I will write, and as the

wind is fair, that will be to-morrow or next day."

After a long conversation Jack was graciously dismissed, Captain Wilson being satisfied from what he had heard, that Jack would turn out a very good officer, and had already forgotten all about equality and the rights of man; but there Captain Wilson was mistaken—tares sown in infancy are not so soon rooted out.

Jack went on deck as soon as the captain had dismissed him, and found the captain and officers of the Spanish corvette standing aft looking very seriously at the Nostra Signora del Carmen. When they saw our hero, whom Captain Wilson had told them was the young officer who had barred their entrance into Carthagena, they turned their eyes upon him, not quite so graciously as they might have done.

Jack, with his usual politeness, took off his hat to the Spanish captain, and glad to have an

opportunity of sporting his Spanish, expressed the usual wish, that he might live a thousand years. The Spanish captain, who had reason to wish that Jack had gone to the devil at least twenty-four hours before, was equally complimentary, and then begged to be informed what the colours were that Jack had hoisted during the action. Jack replied that they were colours to which every Spanish gentleman considered it no disgrace to surrender, although always ready to engage, and frequently attempting to board. Upon which the Spanish captain was very much puzzled. Captain Wilson, who understood a little Spanish, then interrupted by observing,

"By-the-bye, Mr. Easy, what colours did you hoist up? we could not make them out. I see Mr. Jolliffe still keeps them up at the peak."

"Yes, sir," replied Jack, rather puzzled what to call them, but at last he replied, "That it

was the banner of equality and the rights of man."

Captain Wilson frowned, and Jack perceiving that he was displeased, then told him the whole story, whereupon Captain Wilson laughed, and Jack then also explained, in Spanish, to the officers of the corvette, who replied, "That it was not the first time, and would not be the last, that men had got into a scrape through a petticoat."

The Spanish captain complimented Jack on his Spanish, which was really very good, (for in two months, with nothing else in the world to do, he had made great progress,) and asked him where he had learnt it.

Jack replied, "at the Zaffarine Islands."

"Zaffarine Isles," replied the Spanish captain, "they are not inhabited."

"Plenty of ground sharks," replied Jack.

The Spanish captain thought our hero a very

strange fellow, to fight under a green silk petticoat, and to take lessons in Spanish from the ground sharks. However, being quite as polite as Jack, he did not contradict him, but took a huge pinch of snuff, wishing from the bottom of his heart, that the ground sharks had taken Jack before he had hoisted that confounded green petticoat.

However, Jack was in high favour with the captain, and all the ship's company, with the exception of his four enemies—the master, Vigors, the boatswain, and the purser's steward. As for Mr. Vigors, he had come to his senses again, and had put his colt in his chest until Jack should take another cruise. Little Gossett, at any insulting remark made by Vigors, pointed to the window of the berth and grinned; and the very recollection made Vigors turn pale, and awed him into silence.

In two days they arrived at Gibraltar—Mr.

Sawbridge re-joined the ship—so did Mr. Jolliffe—they remained there a fortnight, during which Jack was permitted to be continually on shore—Mr. Asper accompanied him, and Jack drew a heavy bill to prove to his father that he was still alive. Mr. Sawbridge made our hero relate to him all his adventures, and was so pleased with the conduct of Mesty, that he appointed him to a situation which was particularly suited to him,—that of ship's corporal. Mr. Sawbridge knew that it was an office of trust, and provided that he could find a man fit for it, he was very indifferent about his colour. Mesty walked and strutted about at least three inches taller than he was before. He was always clean, did his duty conscientiously, and seldom used his cane.

"I think, Mr. Easy," said the first lieutenant, "that as you are so particularly fond of taking a cruise," for Jack had told the whole

truth, "it might be as well that you improve your navigation."

"I do think myself, sir," replied Jack with great modesty, "that I am not yet quite perfect."

"Well, then, Mr. Jolliffe will teach you; he is the most competent in this ship: the sooner you ask him the better, and if you learn it as fast as you have Spanish, it will not give you much trouble."

Jack thought the advice good: the next day he was very busy with his friend Jolliffe, and made the important discovery that two parallel lines continued to infinity would never meet.

It must not be supposed that Captain Wilson and Mr. Sawbridge received their promotion instanter. Promotion is always attended with delay, as there is a certain routine in the service which must not be departed from. Captain Wilson had orders to return to Malta after his

cruise. He therefore carried his own dispatches away from England—from Malta the dispatches had to be forwarded to Toulon to the admiral, and then the admiral had to send to England to the admiralty, whose reply had to come out again. All this, with the delays arising from vessels not sailing immediately, occupied an interval of between five and six months—during which time there was no alteration in the officers and crew of his Majesty's sloop Harpy.

There had, however, been one alteration; the gunner, Mr. Minus, who had charge of the first cutter in the night action in which our hero was separated from his ship, carelessly loading his musket, had found himself minus his right hand, which, upon the musket going off as he rammed down, had gone off too. He was invalided and sent home during Jack's absence, and another had been appointed, whose name

was Tallboys. Mr. Tallboys was a stout dumpty man, with red face, and still redder hands; he had red hair and red whiskers, and he had read a great deal—for Mr. Tallboys considered that the gunner was the most important personage in the ship. He had once been a captain's clerk, and having distinguished himself very much in cutting-out service, had applied for and received his warrant as a gunner. He had studied the "Art of gunnery," a part of which he understood, but the remainder was above his comprehension: he continued, however, to read it as before, thinking that by constant reading he should understand it at last. He had gone through the work from the title-page to the finis, at least forty times, and had just commenced it over again. He never came on deck without the gunner's vade mecum in his pocket, with his hand always upon it to refer to it in a moment.

But Mr. Tallboys had, as we observed before, a great idea of the importance of a gunner, and, among other qualifications, he considered it absolutely necessary that he should be a navigator. He had at least ten instances to bring forward of bloody actions, in which the captain and all the commissioned officers had been killed or wounded, and the command of the ship had devolved upon the gunner.

"Now, sir," would he say, "if the gunner is no navigator, he is not fit to take charge of his Majesty's ships. The boatswain and carpenter are merely practical men; but the gunner, sir, is, or ought to be, scientific. Gunnery, sir, is a science—we have our own disparts and our lines of sight—our windage and our parabolas and projectile forces—and our point blank, and our reduction of powder upon a graduated scale. Now, sir, there's no excuse for a gunner not being a navigator; for knowing his duty as a gunner,

he has the same mathematical tools to work with." Upon this principle, Mr. Tallboys had added John Hamilton Moore to his library, and had advanced about as far into navigation as he had in gunnery, that is, to the threshold, where he stuck fast, with all his mathematical tools, which he did not know how to use. To do him justice, he studied for two or three hours every day, and it was not his fault if he did not advance—but his head was confused with technical terms; he mixed all up together, and disparts, sines and cosines, parabolas, tangents, windage, seconds, lines of sight, logarithms, projectiles and traverse sailing, quadrature and Gunter's scales, were all crowded together, in a brain which had not capacity to receive the rule of three. "Too much learning," said Festus to the apostle, "hath made thee mad." Mr. Tallboys had not wit enough to go mad, but his learning lay like lead upon his brain;

the more he read, the less he understood, at the same time that he became more satisfied with his supposed acquirements, and could not speak but in "mathematical parables."

"I understand, Mr. Easy," said the gunner to him one day, after they had sailed for Malta, "that you have entered into the science of navigation—at your age it was high time."

"Yes," replied Jack, "I can raise a perpendicular, at all events, and box the compass."

"Yes, but you have not yet arrived to the dispart of the compass."

"Not come to that yet," replied Jack.

"Are you aware that a ship sailing describes a parabola round the globe?"

"Not come to that yet," replied Jack.

"And that any propelled body striking against another flies off at a tangent?"

"Very likely," replied Jack; "that's a *sine* that he don't like it."

"You have not yet entered into *acute* trigonometry?"

"Not come to that yet," replied Jack.

"That will require very sharp attention."

"I should think so," replied Jack.

"You will then find out how your parallels of longitude and latitude meet."

"Two parallel lines, if continued to infinity, will never meet," replied Jack.

"I beg your pardon," said the gunner.

"I beg yours," said Jack.

Whereupon Mr. Tallboys brought up a small map of the world, and showed Jack that all the parallels of latitude met at a point at the top and the bottom.

"Parallel lines never meet," replied Jack, producing Hamilton Moore.

Whereupon Jack and the gunner argued the point, until it was agreed to refer the case to Mr. Jolliffe, who asserted with a smile,

"That those lines were parallels and not parallels."

As both were right, both were satisfied.

It was fortunate that Jack would argue in this instance: had he believed all the confused assertions of the gunner, he would have been as puzzled as the gunner himself. They never met without an argument and a reference, and as Jack was put right in the end, he only learnt the faster. By the time that he did know something about navigation, he discovered that his antagonist knew nothing. Before they arrived at Malta, Jack could fudge a day's work.

But at Malta Jack got into another scrape. Although Mr. Smallsole could not injure him, he was still Jack's enemy; the more so as Jack had become very popular: Vigors also submitted, planning revenge; but the parties in this instance were the boatswain and purser's steward. Jack still continued his forecastle conversations with

Mesty; and the boatswain and purser's steward, probably from their respective ill will towards our hero, had become great allies. Mr. Easthupp now put on his best jacket to walk the dog-watches with Mr. Biggs, and they took every opportunity to talk at our hero.

"It's my peculiar hopinion," said Mr. Easthupp, one evening, pulling at the frill of his shirt, "that a gentleman should behave as a gentleman, and that if a gentleman professes hopinions of hequallity and such liberal sentiments, that he is bound as a gentleman to hact up to them."

"Very true, Mr. Easthupp, he is bound to act up to them; and not because a person, who was a gentleman as well as himself, happens not to be on the quarter-deck, to insult him because he only has perfessed opinions like his own."

Hereupon Mr. Biggs struck his rattan against the funnel, and looked at our hero.

"Yes," continued the purser's steward, "I should like to see the fellow who would have done so on shore: however, the time will come, when I can hagain pull hon my plain coat, and then the hinsult shall be vashed hout in blood, Mr. Biggs."

"And I'll be cursed if I don't some day teach a lesson to the blackguard who stole my trousers."

"Vas hall your money right, Mr. Biggs?" inquired the purser's steward.

"I didn't count," replied the boatswain, magnificently.

"No—gentlemen are habove that," replied Easthupp; "but there are many light-fingered gentry habout. The quantity of vatches and harticles of value vich vere lost ven I valked Bond Street in former times is incredible."

"I can say this, at all events," replied the boatswain, "that I should be always ready to

give satisfaction to any person beneath me in rank, after I had insulted him. I don't stand upon my rank, although I don't talk about equality, damme—no, nor consort with niggers."

All this was too plain for our hero not to understand, so Jack walked up to the boatswain, and taking his hat off, with the utmost politeness, said to him,

"If I mistake not, Mr. Biggs, your conversation refers to me."

"Very likely it does," replied the boatswain. "Listeners hear no good of themselves."

"It happears that gentlemen can't converse without being vatched," continued Mr. Easthupp, pulling up his shirt-collar.

"It is not the first time that you have thought proper to make very offensive remarks, Mr. Biggs; and as you appear to consider yourself ill-treated in the affair of the trousers, for I

tell you at once, that it was I who brought them on board, I can only say," continued our hero, with a very polite bow, "that I shall be most happy to give you satisfaction."

"I am your superior officer, Mr. Easy," replied the boatswain.

"Yes, by the rules of the service; but you just now asserted that you would waive your rank—indeed, I dispute it on this occasion, I am on the quarter-deck, and you are not."

"This is the gentleman whom you have insulted, Mr. Easy," replied the boatswain, pointing to the purser's steward.

"Yes, Mr. Heasy, quite as good a gentleman as yourself, although I av ad misfortunes—I ham of as hold a family as hany in the country," replied Mr. Easthupp, now backed by the boatswain, "many the year did I valk Bond Street, and I ave as good blood in my weins as you,

Mr. Heasy, halthough I have been misfortunate —I've had hadmirals in my family."

"You have grossly insulted this gentleman," said Mr. Biggs, in continuation; "and notwithstanding all your talk of equality, you are afraid to give him satisfaction—you shelter yourself under your quarter-deck."

"Mr. Biggs," replied our hero, who was now very wrath, "I shall go on shore directly we arrive at Malta. Let you, and this fellow, put on plain clothes, and I will meet you both—and then I'll show you whether I am afraid to give satisfaction."

"One at a time," said the boatswain.

"No, sir, not one at a time, but both at the same time—I will fight both or none. If you are my superior officer, you must *descend*," replied Jack, with an ironical sneer, "to meet me, or I will not descend to meet that fellow, whom

I believe to have been little better than a pick-pocket."

This accidental hit of Jack's made the purser's steward turn pale as a sheet, and then equally red. He raved and foamed amazingly, although he could not meet Jack's indignant look, who then turned round again.

"Now, Mr. Biggs, is this to be understood, or do you shelter yourself under your *forecastle?*"

"I'm no dodger," replied the boatswain, "and we will settle the affair at Malta."

At which reply Jack returned to Mesty.

"Massa Easy, I look at um face, dat fello, Eastop, he no like it. I go shore wid you, see fair play, any how—suppose I can?"

Mr. Biggs having declared that he would fight, of course had to look out for a second, and he fixed upon Mr. Tallboys, the gunner, and requested him to be his friend. Mr. Tallboys, who had been latterly very much annoyed

by Jack's victories over him in the science of navigation, and therefore felt ill-will towards him, consented; but he was very much puzzled how to arrange that *three* were to fight at the same time, for he had no idea of there being two duels; so he went to his cabin and commenced reading. Jack, on the other hand, dared not say a word to Jolliffe on the subject: indeed, there was no one in the ship to whom he could confide but Gascoigne; he therefore went to him, and although Gascoigne thought it was excessively *infra. dig.* of Jack to meet even the boatswain, as the challenge had been given there was no retracting: he therefore consented, like all midshipmen, anticipating fun, and quite thoughtless of the consequences.

The second day after they had been anchored in Vallette harbour, the boatswain and gunner, Jack and Gascoigne, obtained permission to go on shore. Mr. Easthupp, the purser's steward,

dressed in his best blue coat with brass buttons and velvet collar, the very one in which he had been taken up when he had been vowing and protesting that he was a gentleman, at the very time that his hand was abstracting a pocket-book, went up on the quarter-deck, and requested the same indulgence, but Mr. Sawbridge refused, as he required him to return staves and hoops at the cooperage. Mesty also, much to his mortification, was not to be spared.

This was awkward, but it was got over by proposing that the meeting should take place behind the cooperage at a certain hour, on which Mr. Easthupp might slip out and borrow a portion of the time appropriated to his duty, to heal the breach in his wounded honour. So the parties all went on shore, and put up at one of the small inns to make the necessary arrangements.

Mr. Tallboys then addressed Mr. Gascoigne,

taking him apart while the boatswain amused himself with a glass of grog, and our hero sat outside, teazing a monkey.

"Mr. Gascoigne," said the gunner, "I have been very much puzzled how this duel should be fought, but I have at last found it out. You see that there are *three* parties to fight; had there been two or four there would have been no difficulty, as the right line or square might guide us in that instance; but we must arrange it upon the *triangle* in this."

Gascoigne stared; he could not imagine what was coming.

"Are you aware, Mr. Gascoigne, of the properties of an equilateral triangle?"

"Yes," replied the midshipman, "it has three equal sides—but what the devil has that to do with the duel?"

"Everything, Mr. Gascoigne," replied the gunner; "it has resolved the great difficulty:

indeed, the duel between three can only be fought upon that principle. You observe," said the gunner, taking a piece of chalk out of his pocket, and making a triangle on the table, " in this figure we have three points, each equidistant from each other; and we have three combatants—so that placing one at each point, it is all fair play for the three: Mr. Easy, for instance, stands here, the boatswain here, and the purser's steward at the third corner. Now, if the distance is fairly measured, it will be all right."

" But then," replied Gascoigne, delighted at the idea, " how are they to fire?"

" It certainly is not of much consequence," replied the gunner, " but still, as sailors, it appears to me that they should fire with the sun; that is, Mr. Easy fires at Mr. Biggs, Mr. Biggs fires at Mr. Easthupp, and Mr. Easthupp fires at Mr. Easy, so that you perceive that each

party has his shot at one, and at the same time receives the fire of another."

Gascoigne was in ecstacies at the novelty of the proceeding, the more so as he perceived that Easy obtained every advantage by the arrangement.

"Upon my word, Mr. Tallboys, I give you great credit; you have a profound mathematical head, and I am delighted with your arrangement. Of course, in these affairs, the principals are bound to comply with the arrangements of the seconds, and I shall insist upon Mr. Easy consenting to your excellent and scientific proposal."

Gascoigne went out, and pulling Jack away from the monkey, told him what the gunner had proposed, at which Jack laughed heartily.

The gunner also explained it to the boatswain, who did not very well comprehend, but replied,

"I dare say it's all right—shot for shot, and d—n all favours."

The parties then repaired to the spot with two pairs of ship's pistols, which Mr. Tallboys had smuggled on shore; and, as soon as they were on the ground, the gunner called Mr. Easthupp out of the cooperage. In the mean time, Gascoigne had been measuring an equilateral triangle of twelve paces—and marked it out. Mr. Tallboys, on his return with the purser's steward, went over the ground, and finding that it was "equal angles subtended by equal sides," declared that it was all right. Easy took his station, the boatswain was put into his, and Mr. Easthupp, who was quite in a mystery, was led by the gunner to the third position.

"But, Mr. Tallboys," said the purser's steward, "I don't understand this—Mr. Easy will first fight Mr. Biggs, will he not?"

"No," replied the gunner, "this is a duel of

three. You will fire at Mr. Easy, Mr. Easy will fire at Mr. Biggs, and Mr. Biggs will fire at you. It is all arranged, Mr. Easthupp."

"But," said Mr. Easthupp, "I do not understand it. Why is Mr. Biggs to fire at me? I have no quarrel with Mr. Biggs."

"Because Mr. Easy fires at Mr. Biggs, and Mr. Biggs must have his shot as well."

"If you have ever been in the company of gentlemen, Mr. Easthupp," observed Gascoigne, "you must know something about duelling."

"Yes, yes, I've kept the best company, Mr. Gascoigne, and I can give a gentleman satisfaction; but"—

"Then, sir, if that is the case, you must know that your honour is in the hands of your second, and that no gentleman appeals."

"Yes, yes, I know that, Mr. Gascoigne, but still I've no quarrel with Mr. Biggs, and therefore, Mr. Biggs, of course you will not aim at me."

"Why, you don't think that I'm going to be fired at for nothing," replied the boatswain; "no, no, I'll have my shot any how."

"But at your friend, Mr. Biggs?"

"All the same, I shall fire at somebody; shot for shot, and hit the luckiest."

"Vel, gentlemen, I purtest against these proceedings," replied Mr. Easthupp; "I came here to have satisfaction from Mr. Easy, and not to be fired at by Mr. Biggs."

"Don't you have satisfaction when you fire at Mr. Easy," replied the gunner; "what more would you have?"

"I purtest against Mr. Biggs firing at me."

"So you would have a shot without receiving one," cried Gascoigne: "the fact is, that this fellow's a confounded coward, and ought to be kicked into the cooperage again."

At this affront Mr. Easthupp rallied, and accepted the pistol offered by the gunner.

"You ear those words, Mr. Biggs; pretty language to use to a gentleman. You shall ear from me, sir, as soon as the ship is paid off. I purtest no longer, Mr. Tallboys, death before dishonour—I'm a gentleman, damme!"

At all events, the swell was not a very courageous gentleman, for he trembled most exceedingly as he pointed his pistol.

The gunner gave the word, as if he were exercising the great guns on board ship.

"Cock your locks!"—"Take good aim at the object!"—"Fire!"—"Stop your vents!"

The only one of the combatants who appeared to comply with the latter supplementary order was Mr. Easthupp, who clapped his hand to his trousers behind, gave a loud yell, and then dropped down: the bullet having passed clean through his seat of honour, from his having presented his broadside as a target to the boatswain as he faced towards our hero. Jack's

shot had also taken effect, having passed through both the boatswain's cheeks, without further mischief than extracting two of his best upper double teeth, and forcing through the hole of the farther cheek the boatswain's own quid of tobacco. As for Mr. Easthupp's ball, as he was very unsettled, and shut his eyes before he fired, it had gone, the Lord knows where.

The purser's steward lay on the ground and screamed—the boatswain spit his double teeth and two or three mouthfuls of blood out, and then threw down his pistols in a rage.

"A pretty business, by God," sputtered he; "he's put my pipe out. How the devil am I to pipe to dinner when I'm ordered, all my wind 'scaping through the cheeks?"

In the mean time, the others had gone to the assistance of the purser's steward, who

continued his vociferations. They examined him, and considered a wound in that part not to be dangerous.

"Hold your confounded bawling," cried the gunner, "or you'll have the guard down here: you're not hurt."

"Han't hi?" roared the steward: "Oh, let me die, let me die; don't move me!"

"Nonsense," cried the gunner, "you must get up and walk down to the boat; if you don't we'll leave you—hold your tongue, confound you. You wont? then I'll give you something to halloo for."

Whereupon Mr. Tallboys commenced cuffing the poor wretch right and left, who received so many swinging boxes of the ear, that he was soon reduced to merely pitiful plaints of "Oh, dear!—such inhumanity—I purtest—oh dear! must I get up? I can't, indeed."

"I do not think he can move, Mr. Tallboys,"

said Gascoigne; "I should think the best plan would be to call up two of the men from the cooperage, and let them take him at once to the hospital."

The gunner went down to the cooperage to call the men. Mr. Biggs, who had bound up his face as if he had a toothache, for the bleeding had been very slight, came up to the purser's steward.

"What the hell are you making such a howling about? Look at me, with two shot-holes through my figure head, while you have only got one in your stern: I wish I could change with you, by heavens, for I could use my whistle then—now if I attempt to pipe, there will be such a wasteful expenditure of his majesty's stores of wind, that I never shall get out a note. A wicked shot of yours, Mr. Easy."

"I really am very sorry," replied Jack, with

a polite bow, "and I beg to offer my best apology."

During this conversation, the purser's steward felt very faint, and thought he was going to die.

"Oh dear! oh dear! what a fool I was; I never was a gentleman—only a swell: I shall die; I never will pick a pocket again—never—never—God forgive me!"

"Why, confound the fellow," cried Gascoigne, "so you were a pick-pocket, were you?"

"I never will again," replied the fellow in a faint voice; "Hi'll hamend and lead a good life—a drop of water—oh! *lagged* at last!"

Then the poor wretch fainted away: and Mr. Tallboys coming up with the men, he was taken on their shoulders and walked off to the hospital, attended by the gunner and also the boatswain, who thought he might as well have a little medical advice before he went on board.

"Well, Easy," said Gascoigne, collecting the pistols and tying them up in his handkerchief, "I'll be shot, but we're in a pretty scrape; there's no hushing this up. I'll be hanged if I care, it's the best piece of fun I ever met with." And at the remembrance of it Gascoigne laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. Jack's mirth was not quite so excessive, as he was afraid that the purser's steward was severely hurt, and expressed his fears.

"At all events, you did not hit him," replied Gascoigne; "all you have to answer for is the boatswain's mug,—I think you've stopped his jaw for the future."

"I'm afraid that our leave will be stopped for the future," replied Jack.

"That we may take our oaths of," replied Gascoigne.

"Then look you, Ned," said Easy, "I've lots of dollars; we may as well be hanged for a

sheep as a lamb, as the saying is; I vote that we do not go on board."

"Sawbridge will send and fetch us," replied Ned; "but he must find us first."

"That won't take long, for the soldiers will soon have our description and rout us out—we shall be pinned in a couple of days."

"Confound it, and they say that the ship is to be hove down, and that we shall be here six weeks at least, cooped up on board in a broiling sun, and nothing to do but to watch the pilot fish playing round the rudder, and munch bad apricots. I won't go on board; look ye, Jack," said Gascoigne, "have you plenty of money?"

"I have twenty doubloons besides dollars," replied Jack.

"Well, then, we will pretend to be so much alarmed at the result of this duel, that we dare not show ourselves, lest we should be hung. I will write a note and send it to Jolliffe, to say

that we have hid ourselves until the affair is blown over, and beg him to intercede with the captain and first lieutenant. I will tell him all the particulars and refer to the gunner for the truth of it; and then I know that although we should be punished, they will only laugh; but I will pretend that Easthupp is killed, and we are frightened out of our lives. That will be it; and then let's get on board one of the speronares which come with fruit from Sicily, sail in the night for Palermo, and then we'll have a cruise for a fortnight, and when the money is all gone we'll come back."

"That's a capital idea, Ned, and the sooner we do it the better. I will write to the captain, begging him to get me off from being hung, and telling him where we have fled to, and that letter shall be given after we have sailed."

They were two very nice lads—our hero and Gascoigne.

CHAPTER III.

In which our hero sets off on another cruise, in which he is not blown OFF shore.

GASCOIGNE and our hero were neither of them in uniform, and they hastened to Nix Mangare stairs, where they soon picked up the padrone of a speronare. They went with him into a wine shop, and with the assistance of a little English from a Maltese boy, whose shirt hung out of his trousers, they made a bargain, by which it was agreed that for the consideration of two doubloons, he would sail that evening and land them at Gergenti or some other town

in Sicily, providing them with something to eat and gregos to sleep upon.

Our two midshipmen then went back to the tavern from which they had set off to fight the duel, and ordering a good dinner to be served in a back room, they amused themselves with killing flies, as they talked over the events of the day, and waited for their dinner.

As Mr. Tallboys did not himself think proper to go on board till the evening, and Mr. Biggs also wished it to be dark before he went up the ship's side, the events of the duel did not transpire till the next morning. Even then it was not known from the boatswain or gunner, but by a hospital mate coming on board to inform the surgeon that there was one of their men wounded under their charge, but that he was doing very well.

Mr. Biggs had ascended the side with his face bound up.

"Confound that Jack Easy," said he, "I have only been on leave twice since I sailed from Portsmouth—once I am obliged to come up the side without my trousers, and show my bare stern to the whole ship's company, and now I am coming up, and dare not show my figure-head." He reported himself to the officer of the watch, and hasting to his cabin, went to bed, and lay the whole night awake from pain, thinking what excuse he could possibly make for not coming on deck next morning to his duty.

He was, however, saved this trouble, for Mr. Jolliffe brought the letter of Gascoigne up to Mr. Sawbridge, and the captain had received that of our hero.

Captain Wilson came on board and found that Mr. Sawbridge could communicate all the particulars of which he had not been acquainted by Jack; and after they had read over Gas-

coigne's letter in the cabin and interrogated Mr. Tallboys, who was sent down under an arrest, they gave free vent to their mirth.

"Upon my soul, there's no end to Mr. Easy's adventures," said the captain. "I could laugh at the duel, for after all, it is nothing—and he would have been let off with a severe reprimand; but the foolish boys have set off in a speronare to Sicily, and how the devil are we to get them back again?"

"They'll come back, sir," replied Sawbridge, "when all their money's gone."

"Yes, if they do not get into any more scrapes—that young scamp Gascoigne is as bad as Easy, and now they are together there's no saying what may happen. I dine at the governor's to-day; how he will laugh when I tell him of this new way of fighting a duel!"

"Yes, sir, it is just the thing that will tickle old Tom."

"We must find out if they have got off the island, Sawbridge, which may not be the case."

But it was the case; Jack and Gascoigne had eaten a very good dinner, sent for the monkey to amuse them till it was dark, and there had waited till the padrone came to them.

"What shall we do with the pistols, Easy?"

"Take them with us, and load them before we go—we may want them: who knows but there may be a mutiny on board of the speronare?—I wish we had Mesty with us."

They loaded the pistols, took a pair each and put them in their waists, concealed under their clothes—divided the ammunition between them, and soon afterwards the padrone came to tell them all was ready.

Whereupon Messrs. Gascoigne and Easy paid their bill and rose to depart, but the padrone informed them that he should like to see the colour of their money before they went on board.

Jack, very indignant at the insinuation that he had not sufficient cash, pulled out a handful of doubloons, and tossing two to the padrone, asked him if he was satisfied.

The padrone untied his sash, put in the money, and with many thanks and protestations of service, begged our young gentlemen to accompany him: they did so, and in a few minutes were clear of Nix Mangare stairs, and, passing close to his Majesty's ship Harpy, were soon out of the harbour of Vallette.

Of all the varieties of vessels which float upon the wave, there is not, perhaps, one that bounds over the water so gracefully or so lightly as a speronare, or any one so picturesque and beautiful to the eye of those who watch its progress.

The night was clear, and the stars shone out brilliantly as the light craft skimmed over the water, and a fragment of a descending and

waning moon threw its soft beams upon the snow-white sail. The vessel, which had no deck, was full of baskets, which had contained grapes and various fruits brought from the ancient granary of Rome, still as fertile and as luxuriant as ever. The crew consisted of the padrone, two men and a boy; the three latter, with their gregos, or night great-coats with hoods, sitting forward before the sail, with their eyes fixed on the land as they flew past point after point, thinking perhaps of their wives, or perhaps of their sweethearts, or perhaps not thinking at all.

The padrone remained aft at the helm, offering every politeness to our two young gentlemen, who only wished to be left alone. At last they requested the padrone to give them gregos to lie down upon, as they wished to go to sleep. He called the boy to take the helm, procured them all they required, and then went forward. And our two midshipmen laid down looking at the

stars above them, for some minutes, without exchanging a word. At last Jack commenced.

"I have been thinking, Gascoigne, that this is very delightful. My heart bounds with the vessel, and it almost appears to me as if the vessel herself was rejoicing in her liberty. Here she is capering over the waves instead of being tied by the nose with a cable and anchor."

"That's a touch of the sentimental, Jack," replied Gascoigne; "but she is no more free than she was when at anchor, for she now is forced to act in obedience to her steersman, and go just where he pleases. You may just as well say that a horse, if taken out of the stable, is free, with the curb and his rider on his back."

"That's a touch of the rational, Ned, which destroys the illusion. Never mind, we are free, at all events. What machines we are on board of a-man-of war? We walk, talk, eat, drink, sleep, and get up, just like clockwork; we are

wound up to go the twenty-four hours, and then wound up again; just like old Smallsole does the chronometers."

"Very true, Jack; but it does not appear to me, that, hitherto, you have kept very good time: you require a little more regulating," said Gascoigne.

"How can you expect any piece of machinery to go well, so damnably knocked about as a midshipman is?" replied our hero.

"Very true, Jack; but sometimes you don't keep any time, for you don't keep any watch. Mr. Asper don't wind you up. You don't go at all."

"No; because he allows me to go *down*; but still I do *go*, Ned."

"Yes, to your hammock—but it's *no go* with old Smallsole, if I want a bit of *caulk*. But, Jack, what do you say—shall we keep watch to-night?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, I have been thinking the same thing—I don't much like the looks of the padrone—he squints."

"That's no proof of any thing, Jack, except that his eyes are not straight: but if you do not like the look of him, I can tell you that he very much liked the look of your doubloons—I saw him start and his eyes twinkled, and I thought at the time it was a pity you had not paid him in dollars."

"It was very foolish in me; but at all events he has not seen all."

"He saw quite enough, Ned."

"Very true, but you should have let him see the pistols, and not have let him see the doubloons."

"Well, if he wishes to take what he has seen, he shall receive what he has not seen—why, there are only four of them?"

"Oh, I have no fear of them, only it may be as well to sleep with one eye open."

"When shall we make the land?"

"To-morrow evening with this wind, and it appears to be steady. Suppose we keep watch and watch, and have our pistols out ready, with the great coats just turned over them, to keep them out of sight?"

"Agreed—it's about twelve o'clock now—who shall keep the middle watch?"

"I will, Jack, if you like it."

"Well, then, mind you kick me hard, for I sleep devilish sound. Good night, and keep a sharp look-out."

Jack was fast asleep in less than ten minutes; and Gascoigne, with his pistols lying by him all ready for each hand, sat up at the bottom of the boat.

There certainly is a peculiar providence in favour of midshipmen compared with the rest of mankind; they have more lives than a cat—always in the greatest danger, but always escaping from it.

The padrone of the vessel had been captivated with the doubloons which Jack had so foolishly exposed to his view, and he had, moreover, resolved to obtain them. At the very time that our two lads were conversing aft, the padrone was talking the matter over with his two men forward, and it was agreed that they should murder, rifle, and then throw them overboard.

About two o'clock in the morning, the padrone came aft to see if they were asleep, but found Gascoigne watching. He returned aft again and again, but found the young man still sitting up. Tired of waiting, anxious to possess the money, and not supposing that the lads were armed, he went once more forward and spoke to the men. Gascoigne had watched his motions; he thought it singular, that with three men in the vessel, the helm should be confided to the boy—and at last he saw them draw their knives. He pushed our hero, who woke immediately.

Gascoigne put his hand over Jack's mouth, that he might not speak, and then whispered his suspicions. Jack seized his pistols—they both cocked them without noise, and then waited in silence, Jack still lying down while Gascoigne continued to sit up at the bottom of the boat. At last Gascoigne saw the three men coming aft—he dropped one of his pistols for a second to give Jack a squeeze of the hand, which was returned, and as Gascoigne watched them making their way through the piles of empty baskets he leaned back as if he was slumbering. The padrone, followed by the two men were at last aft,—they paused a moment before they stepped over the strengthening plank, which ran from side to side of the boat between them and the midshipmen, and as neither of them stirred they imagined that both were asleep—advanced and raised their knives, when Gascoigne and Jack, almost at the same moment, each discharged

their pistols into the breast of the padrone and one of the men who was with him in advance, who both fell with the send aft of the boat, so as to encumber the midshipmen with the weight of their bodies. The third man started back. Jack, who could not rise, from the padrone lying across his legs, took a steady aim with his second pistol and the third man fell. The boy at the helm, who, it appeared, either was aware of what was to be done, or seeing the men advance with their knives, had acted upon what he saw, also drew his knife and struck at Gascoigne from behind; the knife fortunately, after slightly wounding Gascoigne on the shoulder, had shut on the boy's hand—Gascoigne sprang up with his other pistol, the boy started back at the sight of it, lost his balance and fell overboard.

Our two midshipmen took a few seconds to breathe.

"I say, Jack?" said Gascoigne at last, "did you ever ——"

"No, I never ——" replied Jack.

"What's to be done now?"

"Why, as we've got possession, Ned, we had better put a man at the helm—for the speronare is having it all her own way."

"Very true," replied Gascoigne; "and as I can steer better than you, I suppose it must be me."

Gascoigne went to the helm, brought the boat up to the wind, and then they resumed their conversation.

"That rascal of a boy gave me a devil of a lick on the shoulder; I don't know whether he has hurt me—at all events it's my left shoulder, so I can steer just as well. I wonder whether the fellows are dead."

"The padrone is, at all events," replied Jack. "It was as much as I could do to get my legs from under him—but we'll wait till daylight before we see to that—in the mean time, I'll load the pistols again."

"The day is breaking now—it will be light in half-an-hour or less. What a devil of a spree, Jack!"

"Yes, but how can one help it? we ran away because two men are wounded—and now we are obliged to kill four in self-defence."

"Yes, but that is not the end of it; when we get to Sicily what are we to do? we shall be imprisoned by the authorities—perhaps hung."

"We'll argue that point with them," replied Jack.

"We had better argue the point between ourselves, Jack, and see what will be the best plan to get out of our scrape."

"I think that we just *have* got out of it—never fear but we'll get out of the next. Do you know, Gascoigne, it appears to me very odd, but I can do nothing but there's a *bobbery* at the bottom of it."

"You certainly have a great talent that way,

Jack. Don't I hear one of these poor fellows groan?"

"I should think that not impossible."

"What shall we do with them?"

"We will argue that point, Ned—we must either keep their bodies or we must throw them overboard. Either tell the whole story or say nothing about it."

"That's very evident; in short, we must do something, for your argument goes no further. But now let us take up one of your propositions. Well then, suppose we keep the bodies on board, run into a sea-port, go to the authorities and state all the facts, what then?"

"We shall prove, beyond all doubt, that we have killed three men, if not four; but we shall not prove that we were obliged so to do, Jack. And then we are heretics—we shall be put in prison till they are satisfied of our innocence, which we never can prove, and there

we shall remain until we have written to Malta, and a-man-of-war comes to redeem us, if we are not stabbed, or something else, in the mean time."

"That will not be a very pleasant cruise," replied Jack. "Now let's argue the point on the other side."

"There is some difficulty there—suppose we throw their bodies overboard, toss the baskets after them, wash the boat clean and make for the first port. We may chance to hit upon the very spot from which they sailed, and then there will be a pack of wives, and children, and a populace with knives, asking us what has become of the men of the boat?"

"I don't much like the idea of that," said Jack.

"And if we don't have such bad luck, still we shall be interrogated as to who we are, and how we were adrift by ourselves."

"There will be a difficulty about that again—we must swear that it is a party of pleasure, and that we are gentlemen yachting."

"Without a crew or provisions—yachts don't sail with a clean-swept hold, or gentlemen without a spare shirt—we have nothing but two gallons of water and two pairs of pistols."

"I have it," said Jack—"we are two young gentlemen in our own boat who went out to Gozo with pistols to shoot sea-mews, were caught in a gale, and blown down to Sicily—that will excite interest."

"That's the best idea yet, as it will account for our having nothing in the boat. Well then, at all events, we will get rid of the bodies; but suppose they are not dead—we cannot throw them overboard alive, that will be murder."

"Very true," replied Jack, "then we must shoot them first and toss them overboard afterwards."

"Upon my soul, Easy, you are an odd fellow—however go and examine the men and we'll decide that point by-and-bye—you had better keep your pistol ready cocked, for they may be shamming."

"Devil a bit of sham here, any how," replied Jack pulling at the body of the padrone, "and as for this fellow you shot, you might put your fist into his chest. Now for the third," continued Jack, stepping over the strengthening piece—"he's all among the baskets. I say, my cock, are you dead?" and Jack enforced his question with a kick in the ribs. The man groaned. "That's unlucky, Gascoigne, but however I'll soon settle him," said Jack, pointing his pistol.

"Stop, Jack," cried Gascoigne, "it really will be murder."

"No such thing, Ned; I'll just blow his brains out, and then I'll come aft and argue the point with you."

"Now do oblige me by coming aft and arguing the point first. Do, Jack, I beg of you—I entreat you."

"With all my heart," replied Jack, resuming his seat by Gascoigne; "I assert, that in this instance killing's no murder. You will observe, Ned, that by the laws of society, any one who attempts the life of another has forfeited his own; at the same time, as it is necessary that the fact should be clearly proved and justice be duly administered, the parties are tried, convicted, and then are sentenced to the punishment."

"I grant all that."

"In this instance the attempt has been clearly proved; we are the witnesses and are the judges and jury, and society in general, for the best of all possible reasons, because there is nobody else. These men's lives being therefore forfeited to society, belong to us; and it does not

follow because they were not all killed in the attempt, that therefore they are not now to be brought out for punishment. And as there is no common hangman here, we, of course, must do this duty as well as every other. I have now clearly proved that I am justified in what I am about to do. But the argument does not stop there—self-preservation is the first law of nature, and if we do not get rid of this man, what is the consequence ?—that we shall have to account for his being wounded, and then, instead of judges, we shall immediately be placed in the position of culprits and have to defend ourselves without witnesses. We therefore risk our lives from a misplaced lenity towards a wretch unworthy to live."

"Your last argument is strong, Easy, but I cannot consent to your doing what may occasion you uneasiness hereafter when you think of it."

"Pooh! nonsense—I'm a philosopher."

"Of what school, Jack? Oh, I presume, you are a disciple of Mesty's. I do not mean to say that you are wrong, but still hear my proposition. Let us lower down the sail, and then I can leave the helm to assist you. We will clear the vessel of every thing except the man who is still alive. At all events, we may wait a little, and if at last there is no help for it, I will then agree with you to launch him overboard, even if he is not quite dead."

"Agreed; even by your own making out, it will be no great sin. He is half dead already—I only do *half* the work of tossing him over, so it will be only *quarter* murder on my part, and he would have shown no quarter on his." Here Jack left off arguing and punning, and went forward and lowered down the sail. "I've half a mind to take my doubloons back," said Jack, as they launched over the body of the padrone,

"but he may have them—I wonder whether they'll ever turn up again."

"Not in our time, Jack," replied Gascoigne.

The other body, and all the basket lumber, &c. were then tossed over, and the boat was cleared of all but the man who was not yet dead.

"Now let's examine the fellow, and see if he has any chance of recovery," said Gascoigne.

The man lay on his side, Gascoigne turned him over and found that he was dead.

"Over with him, quick," said Jack, "before he comes to life again."

The body disappeared under the wave—they again hoisted the sail, Gascoigne took the helm, and our hero proceeded to draw water and wash away the stains of blood; he then cleared the boat of vine-leaves and rubbish, with which it was strewed, swept it clean fore and aft, and resumed his seat by his comrade.

"There," said Jack, "now we've swept the decks, we may pipe to dinner. I wonder whether there is any thing to eat in the locker?"

Jack opened it, and found some bread, garlic, sausages, a bottle of aquadente and a jar of wine.

"So the padrone did keep his promise, after all."

"Yes, and had you not tempted him with the sight of so much gold, might now have been alive."

"To which I reply, that if you had not advised our going off in a speronare, he would now have been alive."

"And if you had not fought a duel, I should not have given the advice."

"And if the boatswain had not been obliged to come on board without his trousers, at Gibraltar, I should not have fought a duel."

"And if you had not joined the ship, the boatswain would have had his trousers on."

"And if my father had not been a philosopher, I should not have gone to sea; so that it is all my father's fault, and he has killed four men off the coast of Sicily, without knowing it —cause and effect. After all, there's nothing like argument; so having settled that point, let us go to dinner."

Having finished their meal, Jack went forward and observed the land ahead; they steered the same course for three or four hours.

"We must haul our wind more," said Gascoigne; "it will not do to put into any small town: we have now to choose, whether we shall land on the coast and sink the speronare, or land at some large town."

"We must argue that point," replied Jack.

"In the mean time, do you take the helm, for my arm is quite tired," replied Gascoigne: "you can steer well enough—by-the-bye, I may as well look at my shoulder, for it is quite

stiff." Gascoigne pulled off his coat, and found his shirt bloody and sticking to the wound, which, as we before observed, was slight. He again took the helm, while Jack washed it clean and then bathed it with aquadente.

"Now take the helm again," said Gascoigne; "I'm on the sick list."

"And as surgeon—I'm an idler," replied Jack; "but what shall we do?" continued he; "abandon the speronare at night and sink her, or run in for a town?"

"We shall fall in with plenty of boats and vessels if we coast it up to Palermo, and they may overhaul us."

"We shall fall in with plenty of people if we go on shore, and they will overhaul us."

"Do you know, Jack, that I wish we were back and along side of the Harpy; I've had cruising enough."

"My cruises are so unfortunate," replied

Jack; "they are too full of adventure; but then, I have never yet had a cruise on shore. Now, if we could only get to Palermo, we should be out of all our difficulties."

"The breeze freshens, Jack," replied Gascoigne; "and it begins to look very dirty to windward. I think we shall have a gale."

"Pleasant—I know what it is to be short-handed in a gale; however, there's one comfort, we shall not be blown *off shore* this time."

"No, but we may be wrecked on a lee shore. She cannot carry her whole sail, Easy, we must lower it down, and take in a reef; the sooner the better, for it will be dark in an hour. Go forward and lower it down, and then I'll help you."

Jack did so, but the sail went into the water, and he could not drag it in.

"Avast heaving," said Gascoigne, "till I throw her up and take the wind out of it."

This was done; they reefed the sail but could not hoist it up; if Gascoigne left the helm to help Jack, the sail filled; if he went to the helm and took the wind out of the sail, Jack was not strong enough to hoist it. The wind increased rapidly, and the sea got up, the sun went down, and with the sail half hoisted, they could not keep to the wind, but were obliged to run right for the land. The speronare flew, rising on the crest of the waves with half her keel clear of the water: the moon was already up, and gave them light enough to perceive that they were not five miles from the coast, which was lined with foam.

"At all events, they can't accuse us of running away with the boat," observed Jack; "for she's running away with us."

"Yes," replied Gascoigne, dragging at the tiller with all his strength; "she has taken the bit between her teeth."

"I wouldn't care if I had a bit between mine," replied Jack; "for I feel devilish hungry again. What do you say, Ned?"

"With all my heart," replied Gascoigne; "but, do you know, Easy, it may be the last meal we ever make."

"Then I vote it's a good one—but why so, Ned?"

"In half-an-hour, or there abouts, we shall be on shore."

"Well, that's where we want to go."

"Yes, but the sea runs high, and the boat may be dashed to pieces on the rocks."

"Then we shall be asked no questions about her or the men."

"Very true, but a lee shore is no joke; we may be knocked to pieces, as well as the boat —even swimming may not help us. If we could find a cove or sandy beach, we might, perhaps, manage to get on shore."

"Well," replied Jack; "I have not been long at sea, and, of course, cannot know much about these things. I have been blown off shore, but I never have been blown on. It may be as you say, but I do not see the great danger—let's run her right up on the beach at once."

"That's what I shall try to do," replied Gascoigne; who had been four years at sea, and knew very well what he was about.

Jack handed him a huge piece of bread and sausage.

"Thank ye, I cannot eat."

"I can," replied Jack, with his mouth full.

Jack ate while Gascoigne steered; and the rapidity with which the speronare rushed to the beach was almost frightful. She darted like an arrow from wave to wave, and appeared as if mocking their attempts as they curled their summits almost over her narrow stern. They were within a mile of the beach, when Jack,

who had finished his supper, and was looking at the foam boiling on the coast, exclaimed,

"That's very fine—very beautiful, upon my soul!"

"He cares for nothing," thought Gascoigne; "he appears to have no idea of danger."

"Now, my dear fellow," said Gascoigne, "in a few minutes we shall be on the rocks. I must continue at the helm, for the higher she is forced up the better chance for us; but we may not meet again, so if we do not, Good-bye, and God bless you."

"Gascoigne," said Jack, "you are hurt and I am not; your shoulder is stiff, and you can hardly move your left arm. Now I can steer for the rocks as well as you. Do you go to the bow, and there you will have a better chance.—By-the-bye," continued he, picking up his pistols, and sticking them into his waist, "I won't leave them, they've served us too good a turn already. Gascoigne, give me the helm."

"No, no, Easy."

"I say yes," replied Jack, in a loud, authoritative tone, "and what's more, I will be obeyed, Gascoigne. I have nerve, if I haven't knowledge, and at all events I can steer for the beach. I tell you, give me the helm.—Well, then, if you won't,—I must take it."

Easy wrested the tiller from Gascoigne's hand, and gave him a shove forward.

"Now do you look out ahead, and tell me how to steer."

Whatever may have been Gascoigne's feelings at this behaviour of our hero's, it immediately occurred to him, that he could not do better than to run the speronare to the safest point, and that therefore he was probably more advantageously employed, than if he were at the helm. He went forward and looked at the rocks, covered at one moment with the tumultuous waters, and then pouring down cascades from

their sides as the waves recoiled. He perceived a chasm right ahead, and he thought if the boat was steered for that, she must be thrown up so as to enable them to get clear of her, for, at every other part, escape appeared impossible.

"Starboard a little—that'll do. Steady—port it is—port.—Steer small, for your life, Easy. Steady now—mind the yard don't hit your head—hold on."

The speronare was at this moment thrown into a large cleft in a rock, the sides of which were nearly perpendicular; nothing else could have saved them, as had they struck the rock outside, the boat would have been dashed to pieces, and its fragments have disappeared in the undertow. As it was, the cleft was not four feet more than the width of the boat, and as the waves hurled her up into it, the yard of the speronare was thrown fore and aft with great violence, and had not Jack been warned,

he would have been struck overboard without a chance of being saved; but he crouched down, and it passed over him. As the water receded, the boat struck, and was nearly dry between the rocks, but another wave followed, dashing the boat farther up, but, at the same time, filling it with water. The bow of the boat was now several feet higher than the stern, where Jack held on; and the weight of the water in her, with the force of the returning waves, separated her right across abaft the mast. Jack perceived that the after part of the boat was going out again with the wave; he caught hold of the yard which had swung fore and aft, and as he clung to it, the part of the boat on which he had stood disappeared from under him, and was swept away by the returning current.

Jack required the utmost of his strength to maintain his position until another wave floated him, and dashed him higher up; but he knew

his life depended on holding on to the yard, which he did, although under water, and advanced several feet. When the wave receded, he found footing on the rock, and still clinging, he walked till he had gained the fore part of the boat, which was wedged firmly into a narrow part of the cleft. The next wave was not very large, and he had gained so much that it did not throw him off his legs. He reached the rock, and as he climbed up the side of the chasm to gain the ledge above, he perceived Gascoigne standing above him, and holding out his hand to his assistance.

"Well," says Jack, shaking himself to get rid of the water, "here we are, ashore at last—I had no idea of anything like this. The rush back of the water was so strong that it has almost torn my arms out of their sockets. How very lucky I sent you forward with your disabled shoulder. By-the-bye, now that it's all

over, and you must see that I was right, I beg to apologize for my rudeness."

"There needs no apology for saving my life, Easy," replied Gascoigne, trembling with the cold; "and no one but you would ever have thought of making one at such a moment."

"I wonder whether the ammunition's dry," said Jack; "I put it all in my hat."

Jack took off his hat, and found the cartridges had not suffered.

"Now then, Gascoigne, what shall we do?"

"I hardly know," replied Gascoigne.

"Suppose, then, we sit down and argue the point."

"No, I thank you, there will be too much cold water thrown upon our arguments—I'm half dead, let us walk on."

"With all my heart," said Jack, "it's devilish steep, but I can argue up hill or down hill, wet or dry—I'm used to it—for, as I told you be-

fore, Ned, my father is a philosopher, and so am I."

"By the Lord! *you are*," replied Gascoigne, as he walked on.

CHAPTER IV.

In which our hero follows his destiny and forms a tableau.

Our hero and his comrade climbed the precipice, and, after some minutes' severe toil, arrived at the summit, when they sat down to recover themselves. The sky was clear although the gale blew strong. They had an extensive view of the coast, lashed by the angry waves.

"It's my opinion, Ned," said Jack, as he surveyed the expanse of troubled water, "that we're just as well out of that."

"I agree with you, Jack; but it's also my opinion that we should be just as well out of this, for the wind blows through one. Suppose

we go a little farther inland, where we may find some shelter till the morning."

"It's rather dark to find anything," rejoined our hero; "but however a westerly gale on the top of a mountain with wet clothes in the middle of the night, with nothing to eat or drink, is not the most comfortable position in the world, and we may change for the better."

They proceeded over a flat of a hundred yards and then descended—the change in the atmosphere was immediate. As they continued their march inland, they came to a high road, which appeared to run along the shore, and they turned into it; for, as Jack said very truly, a road must lead to something. After a quarter of an hour's walk, they again heard the rolling of the surf, and perceived the white walls of houses.

"Here we are at last," said Jack. "I wonder if any one will turn out to take us in, or shall

we stow away for the night, in one of those vessels hauled up on the beach?"

"Recollect this time, Easy," said Gascoigne, "not to show your money; that is, show only a dollar, and say you have no more, or promise to pay when we arrive at Palermo; and if they will neither trust us, nor give to us, we must make it out as we can.

"How the cursed dogs bark! I think we shall do very well this time, Gascoigne; we do not look as if we were worth robbing, at all events, and we have the pistols to defend ourselves with if we are attacked. Depend upon it I will show no more gold. And now let us make our arrangements. Take you one pistol, and take half the gold—I have it all in my right-hand pocket—my dollars and pistarenes in my left. You shall take half of them, too. We have silver enough to go on with till we are in a safe place."

Jack then divided the money in the dark, and also gave Gascoigne a pistol.

"Now then, shall we knock for admittance? —Let's first walk through the village, and see if there's anything like an inn. Those yelping curs will soon be at our heels; they come nearer and nearer every time. There's a cart, and it's full of straw—suppose we go to bed till to-morrow morning—we shall be warm, at all events."

"Yes," replied Gascoigne, "and sleep much better than in any of the cottages. I have been in Sicily before, and you have no idea how the fleas bite."

Our two midshipmen climbed up into the cart, nestled themselves into the straw, or rather Indian corn leaves, and were soon fast asleep. As they had not slept for two nights, it is not to be wondered at, that they slept soundly,—so soundly indeed, that about two hours after they had got into their comfortable bed, the peasant

who had brought to the village some casks of wine to be shipped and taken down the coast in a felucca, yoked his bullocks, and not being aware of his freight, drove off without, in any way, disturbing their repose, although the roads in Sicily are not yet macadamized.

The jolting of the roads rather increased than disturbed the sleep of our adventurers; and, although there were some rude shocks, it only had the effect of making them fancy in their dreams that they were again in the boat, and that she was still dashing against the rocks. In about two hours, the cart arrived at its destination—the peasant unyoked his bullocks and led them away. The same cause will often produce contrary effects: the stopping of the motion of the cart disturbed the rest of our two midshipmen; they turned round in the straw, yawned, spread out their arms, and then awoke. Gascoigne, who felt considerable pain in his shoulder, was the first to recall his scattered senses.

"Easy," cried he, as he sat up and shook off the corn-leaves.

"Port it is," said Jack, half dreaming.

"Come, Easy, you are not on board now.—Rouse and bitt."

Jack then sat up and looked at Gascoigne. The forage in the cart was so high round them that they could not see above it; they rubbed their eyes, yawned, and looked at each other.

"Have you any faith in dreams," said Jack to Gascoigne, "because I had a very queer one last night."

"Well, so had I," replied Gascoigne. "I dreamt that the cart rolled by itself into the sea, and went away with us right in the wind's eye back to Malta; and considering that it never was built for such service, she behaved uncommonly well. Now, what was your dream?"

"Mine was, that we woke up and found ourselves in the very town from which the spero-

nare had sailed, and that they had found the fore part of the speronare among the rocks, had recognised her, and picked up one of our pistols. That they had laid hold of us, and had insisted that we had been thrown on shore in the boat, and asked us what had become of the crew—they were just seizing us, when I awoke."

"Your dream is more likely to come true than mine, Easy; but still I think we need not fear that. At the same time, we had better not remain here any longer; and it occurs to me, that if we tore our clothes more, it would be advisable—we shall, in the first place, look more wretched; and, in the next place, can replace them with the dress of the country, and so travel without exciting suspicion. You know that I can speak Italian pretty well."

"I have no objection to tear my clothes if you wish," replied Jack; "at the same time give me your pistol; I will draw the charges and load them again. They must be wet."

Having reloaded the pistols and rent their garments, the two midshipmen stood up in the cart and looked about them.

"Halloo!—why how's this, Gascoigne? last night we were close to the beach, and among houses, and now—where the devil are we? You dreamt nearer the mark than I did, for the cart has certainly taken a cruise."

"We must have slept like midshipmen, then," replied Gascoigne: "surely it cannot have gone far."

"Here we are, surrounded by hills on every side, for at least a couple of miles. Surely some good genius has transported us into the interior, that we might escape from the relatives of the crew whom I dreamt about," said Jack, looking at Gascoigne.

As it afterwards was known to them, the speronare had sailed from the very sea-port in which they had arrived that night, and where

they had got into the cart. The wreck of the speronare had been found, and had been recognised, and it was considered by the inhabitants that the padrone and his crew had perished in the gale. Had they found our two midshipmen and questioned them, it is not improbable that suspicion might have been excited, and the results have been such as our hero had conjured up in his dream. But, as we said before, there is a peculiar providence for midshipmen.

On a minuter survey, they found that they were in an open space which, apparently, had been used for thrashing and winnowing maize, and that the cart was standing under a clump of trees in the shade.

"There ought to be a house hereabouts," said Gascoigne; "I should think that behind the trees we shall find one. Come, Jack, you are as hungry as I am, I'll answer for it; we must look out for a breakfast somewhere."

"If they won't give us something to eat, or sell it," replied Jack, who was ravenous, clutching his pistol, "I shall take it—I consider it no robbery. The fruits of the earth were made for us all, and it never was intended that one man should have a superfluity and another starve. The laws of equality—"

"May appear very good arguments to a starving man, I grant, but still, won't prevent his fellow-creatures from hanging him," replied Gascoigne. "None of your confounded nonsence, Jack; no man starves with money in his pocket, and as long as you have that, leave those that have none to talk about equality and the rights of man."

"I should like to argue that point with you, Gascoigne."

"Tell me, do you prefer sitting down here to argue, or to look out for some breakfast, Jack?"

"Oh, the argument may be put off, but hunger cannot."

"That's very good philosophy, Jack, so let's go on."

"They went through the copse of wood, which was very thick, and soon discovered the wall of a large house on the other side.

"All right," said Jack; "but still let us reconnoitre. It's not a farm-house, it must belong to a person of some consequence—all the better, they will see that we are gentlemen, notwithstanding our tattered dress. I suppose we are to stick to the story of the sea mews at Gozo."

"Yes," replied Gascoigne; "I can think of nothing better. But the English are well received in this island; we have troops at Palermo."

"Have we? I wish I was sitting down at the mess-table—but what's that? a woman scream-

ing? Yes, by heavens!—come along, Ned." And away dashed Jack towards the house followed by Gascoigne. As they advanced the screams redoubled; they entered the porch, burst into the room, from whence they proceeded, and found an elderly gentleman defending himself against two young men, who were held back by an elderly and a young lady. Our hero and his comrade had both drawn their pistols, and just as they burst open the door, the old gentleman who defended himself against such odds had fallen down. The two others burst from the women and were about to pierce him with their swords, when Jack seized one by the collar of his coat and held him fast, pointing the muzzle of the pistol to his ear: Gascoigne did the same to the other. It was a very dramatic tableau. The two women flew to the elderly gentleman and raised him up; the two assailants being held just as dogs hold pigs by the ear,

trembling with fright, with the points of their rapiers dropped, looked at the midshipmen and the muzzles of their pistols with equal dismay; at the same time, the astonishment of the elderly gentleman and the women, at such an unexpected deliverance, was equally great. There was a silence for a few seconds.

"Ned," at last said Jack, "tell these chaps to drop their swords, or we fire."

Gascoigne gave the order in Italian, and it was complied with. The midshipmen then possessed themselves of the rapiers and gave the young men their liberty.

The elderly gentleman at last broke the silence.

"It would appear, signors, that there was an especial interference of providence, to prevent you from committing a foul and unjust murder. Who these are that have so opportunely come to my rescue, I know not, but thanking them as

I do now, I think that you will yourselves, when you are calm, also thank them for having prevented you from committing an act which would have loaded you with remorse and embittered your future existence. Gentlemen, you are free to depart: you, Don Silvio, have indeed disappointed me, your gratitude should have rendered you incapable of such conduct: as for you, Don Scipio, you have been misled; but you both have, in one point, disgraced yourselves. Ten days back my sons were both here, why did you not come then? if you sought revenge on me, you could not have inflicted it deeper than through my children, and at least you would not have acted the part of assassins in attacking an old man. Take your swords, gentlemen, and use them better henceforth. Against future attacks I shall be well prepared."

Gascoigne, who perfectly understood what was

said, presented the sword to the young gentleman from whom he had taken it—our hero did the same. The two young men returned them to their sheaths, and quitted the room without saying a word.

"Whoever you are, I owe to you and thank you for my life," said the elderly gentleman, scanning the outward appearance of our two midshipmen.

"We are," replied Gascoigne, "officers in the English navy and gentlemen; we were wrecked in our boat last night, and have wandered here in the dark, seeking for assistance, and food, and some conveyance to Palermo, where we shall find friends and the means of appearing like gentlemen."

"Was your ship wrecked, gentlemen?" inquired the Sicilian; "and many lives lost?"

"No, our ship is at Malta; we were in a boat on a party of pleasure, were caught by a

gale and driven on the coast. To satisfy you of the truth, observe that our pistols have the king's mark, and that we are not paupers, we show you gold."

Gascoigne pulled out his doubloons—and Jack did the same, coolly observing,

"I thought we were only to show silver, Ned!"

"It needed not that," replied the gentleman; "your conduct in this affair, your manners and address, fully convince me that you are what you represent—but were you common peasants, I am equally indebted to you for my life, and you may command me. Tell me in what way I can be of service."

"In giving us something to eat, for we have had nothing for many, many hours. After that, we may, perhaps, trespass a little more upon your kind offices."

"You must, of course, be surprised at what

has passed, and curious to known the occasion," said the gentleman; "you have a right to be informed of it, and shall be, as soon as you are more comfortable; in the mean time, allow me to introduce myself as Don Rebiera de Silva."

"I wish," said Jack, who, from his knowledge of Spanish, could understand the whole of the last part of the don's speech, "that he would introduce us to his breakfast."

"So do I," said Gascoigne; "but we must wait a little—he ordered the ladies to prepare something instantly."

"Your friend does not speak Italian," said Don Rebiera.

"No, Don Rebiera, he speaks French and Spanish."

"If he speaks Spanish my daughter can converse with him, she has but shortly arrived from Spain. We are closely united with a noble house in that country."

Don Rebiera then led the way to another room, and in a short time there was a repast brought in, to which our midshipmen did great justice.

"I will now," said the Don, "relate to you, sir, for the information of yourself and friend, the causes which produced this scene of violence, which you so opportunely defeated. But first, as it must be very tedious to your friend, I will send for Donna Clara and my daughter Agnes to talk to him; my wife understands a little Spanish, and my daughter, as I said before, has but just left the country, where, from circumstances, she remained some years."

As soon as Donna Clara and Donna Agnes made their appearance and were introduced, Jack, who had not before paid attention to them, said to himself, "I have seen a face like that girl's before." If so, he had never seen many like it, for it was the quintessence of

brunette beauty, and her figure was equally perfect; although not having yet completed her fifteenth year, it required still a little more developement.

Donna Clara was extremely gracious, and as, perhaps, she was aware that her voice would drown that of her husband, she proposed to our hero to walk in the garden, and in a few minutes they took their seats in a pavilion at the end of it. The old lady did not talk much Spanish, but when at a loss for a word she put in an Italian one, and Jack understood her perfectly well. She told him, her sister had married a Spanish nobleman many years since, and that before the war broke out between the Spanish and the English, they had gone over with all their children to see her; that when they wished to return, her daughter Agnes, then a child, was suffering under a lingering complaint, and it was thought advisable, as she was

very weak, to leave her under the charge of her aunt, who had a little girl of nearly the same age; that they were educated together at a convent, near Tarragona, and that she had only returned two months ago; that she had a very narrow escape, as the ship in which her uncle, and aunt, and cousins, as well as herself, were on board, returning from Genoa, where her brother-in-law had been obliged to go to secure a succession to some property bequeathed to him, had been captured in the night by the English; but the officer, who was very polite, had allowed them to go away next day, and very handsomely permitted them to take all their effects.

"Oh, oh," thought Jack; "I thought I had seen her face before; this then was one of the girls in the corner of the cabin—now, I'll have some fun."

During the conversation with the mother,

Donna Agnes had remained some paces behind, picking now and then a flower, and not attending to what passed.

When our hero and her mother sat down in the pavilion she joined them, when Jack addressed her with his usual politeness.

"I am almost ashamed to be sitting by you, Donna Agnes, in this ragged dress—but the rocks of your coast have no respect for persons."

"We are under great obligations, signor, and do not regard such trifles."

"You are all kindness, signora," replied Jack; "I little thought this morning of my good fortune,—I can tell the fortunes of others, but not my own."

"You can tell fortunes!" replied the old lady.

"Yes, madam, I am famous for it—shall I tell your daughter her's?"

Donna Agnes looked at our hero, and smiled.

"I perceive that the young lady does not believe me; I must prove my art, by telling her of what has already happened to her. The signora will then give me credit."

"Certainly, if you do that," replied Agnes.

"Oblige me, by showing me the palm of your hand."

Agnes extended her little hand, and Jack felt so very polite, that he was nearly kissing it. However he restrained himself, and examining the lines—

"That you were educated in Spain—that you arrived here but two months ago—that you were captured and released by the English your mother has already told me; but to prove to you that I knew all that, I must now be more particular. You were in a ship mounting fourteen guns—was it not so?"

Donna Agnes nodded her head.

"I never told the signor that," cried Donna Clara.

"She was taken by surprise in the night, and there was no fighting. The next morning, the English burst open the cabin door; your uncle and your cousin fired their pistols."

"Holy Virgin!" cried Agnes with surprise.

"The English officer was a young man not very good looking."

"There you are wrong, signor, he was very handsome."

"There is no accounting for taste, signora; you were frightened out of your wits, and with your cousin you crouched down in the corner of the cabin. Let me examine that little line closer—you had, yes it's no mistake, you had very little clothes on."

Agnes tore away her hand and covered her face.

"E vero, E vero, Holy Jesus! how could you know that?"

Of a sudden Agnes looked at our hero, and after a minute appeared to recognize him.

"Oh mother, 'tis he;—I recollect now, 'tis he!"

"Who, my child?" replied Donna Clara, who had been struck dumb with Jack's astonishing power of fortune-telling.

"The officer who captured us and was so kind."

Jack burst out into a laughter, not to be controlled for some minutes, and then acknowledged that she had discovered him.

"At all events, Donna Agnes," said he at last, "acknowledge that, ragged as I am, I have seen you in a much greater dishabille."

Agnes sprang up and took to her heels, that she might hide her confusion, and at the same time go to her father and tell him who he had as his guest.

Although Don Rebiera had not yet finished

his narrative, this announcement of Agnes, who ran in breathless to communicate it immediately brought all parties together, and Jack received their thanks.

"I little thought," said the Don, "that I should have been so doubly indebted to you, sir. Command my services as you please, both of you. My sons are at Palermo, and I trust you will allow them the pleasure of your friendship when you are tired of remaining with us."

Jack made his politest bow, and then with a shrug of his shoulders looked down upon his habiliments, which, to please Gascoigne, he had torn into ribbands, as much as to say, we are not provided for a lengthened stay.

"My brothers' clothes will fit them, I think," said Agnes to her father; "they have left plenty in their wardrobes."

"If the signors will condescend to wear them, till they can replace their own."

Midshipmen are very condescending—they followed Don Rebiera, and condescended to put on clean shirts belonging to Don Philip and Don Martin; also to put on their trousers—to select their best waistcoats and coats—in short, they condescended to have a regular fit out—and it so happened that the fit out was not far from a regular *fit*.

Having condescended, they then descended, and the intimacy between all parties became so great that it appeared as if they not only wore the young men's clothes, but also stood in their shoes. Having thus made themselves presentable, Jack presented his hand to both ladies, and led them into the garden, that Don Rebiera might finish his long story to Gascoigne without further interruption, and resuming their seats in the pavilion, he entertained the ladies with a history of his cruise in the ship after her capture. Agnes soon recovered from her re-

serve, and Jack had the forbearance not to allude again to the scene in the cabin, which was the only thing she dreaded. After dinner, when the family, according to custom, had retired for the siesta, Gascoigne and Jack, who had slept enough in the cart to last for a week, went out together in the garden.

"Well, Ned," said Jack, "do you wish yourself on board the Harpy again?"

"No," replied Gascoigne, "we have fallen on our feet at last, but still not without first being knocked about like peas in a rattle. What a lovely little creature that Agnes is! How strange that you should fall in with her again! How odd that we should come here!"

"My good fellow, we did not come here. Destiny brought us in a cart. She may take us to Tyburn in the same way."

"Yes, if you sport your philosophy as you did when we awoke this morning."

"Nevertheless, I'll be hanged if I'm not right. Suppose we argue the point?"

"Right or wrong, you will be hanged, Jack; so instead of arguing the point, suppose I tell you what the Don made such a long story about."

"With all my heart; let us go to the pavillion."

Our hero and his friend took their seats, and Gascoigne then communicated the history of Don Rebiera, to which we shall dedicate the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER V.

A long story, which the reader must listen to, as well as our hero.

"I HAVE already made you acquainted with my name, and I have only to add, that it is one of the most noble in Sicily, and that there are few families who possess such large estates. My father was a man who had no pleasure in the pursuits of most of the young men of his age; he was of a weakly constitution, and was with difficulty reared to manhood. When his studies were completed he retired to his country-seat, belonging to our family, which is about twenty miles from Palermo, and shutting himself up, devoted himself wholly to literary pursuits.

"As he was an only son, his parents were naturally very anxious that he should marry; the more so as his health did not promise him a very extended existence. Had he consulted his own inclinations he would have declined, but he felt that it was his duty to comply with their wishes; but he did not trouble himself with the choice, leaving it wholly to them. They selected a young lady of high family, and certainly of most exquisite beauty. I only wish I could say more in her favour, for she was my mother; but it is impossible to narrate the history without exposing her conduct. The marriage took place, and my father, having woke up as it were at the celebration, again returned to his closet, to occupy himself in abtruse studies; the results of which have been published, and have fully established his reputation as a man of superior talent and deep research. But, however much the public may appreciate the works of a man of

genius, whether they be written to instruct or to amuse, certain it is, that a literary man requires, in his wife, either a mind congenial to his own, or that pride in her husband's talents which induces her to sacrifice much of her own domestic enjoyment to the satisfaction of having his name extolled abroad. I mention this point as some extenuation of my mother's conduct. She was neglected most certainly, but not neglected for frivolous amusements, or because another form had more captivated his fancy; but, in his desire to instruct others, and I may add, his ambition for renown, he applied himself to his literary pursuits, became abstracted, answered without hearing, and left his wife to amuse herself in any way she might please. A literary husband is, without exception, although always at home, the least domestic husband in the world, and must try the best of tempers, not by unkindness, for my father was kind and indulgent to

excess, but by that state of perfect abstraction and indifference which he showed to every thing except the favourite pursuit which absorbed him. My mother had but to speak, and every wish was granted—a refusal was unknown. You may say, what could she want more; I reply, that any thing to a woman is preferable to indifference. The immediate consent to every wish took away, in her opinion, all merit in the grant; the value of every thing is only relative, and in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining it. The immediate assent to every opinion was tantamount to insult; it implied that he did not choose to argue with her.

"It is true, that women like to have their own way; but they like, at the same time, to have difculties to surmount and to conquer. Otherwise, half the gratification is lost. Although tempests are to be deplored, still a certain degree of oscillation and motion are requisite to keep fresh

and clear the lake of matrimony, the waters of which otherwise soon stagnate and become foul, and without some contrary currents of opinion between a married couple such a stagnation must take place.

"A woman permitted always and invariably to have her own way without control, is much in the same situation as the child who insists upon a whole instead of half a holiday, and before the evening closes is tired of himself and every thing about him. In short, a little contradiction, like salt at dinner, seasons and appetizes the repast; but too much, like the condiment in question, spoils the whole, and it becomes unpalatable in proportion to its excess.

"My mother was a vain woman in every sense of the word—vain of her birth and of her beauty, and accustomed to receive that homage to which she considered herself entitled. She had been spoiled in her infancy, and as she grew up

had learnt nothing, because she was permitted to do as she pleased; she was therefore frivolous, and could not appreciate what she could not comprehend. There never was a more ill-assorted union."

"I have always thought that such must be the case," replied Gascoigne, "in Catholic countries, where a young person is taken out of a convent and mated according to what her family or her wealth may consider as the most eligible connexion."

"On that subject there are many opinions, my friend," replied Don Rebiera. "It is true, that when a marriage of convenience is arranged by the parents, the dispositions of the parties are made a secondary point; but then, again, it must be remembered, that when a choice is left to the parties themselves, it is at an age at which there is little worldly consideration; and, led away, in the first place, by their passions,

they form connexions with those inferior in their station, which are attended with eventual unhappiness; or, in the other, allowing that they do choose in their own rank of life, they make quite as bad or often a worse choice, than if their partners were selected for them."

"I cannot understand that," replied Gascoigne.

"The reason is, because there are no means, or if means, no wish, to study each other's disposition. A young man is attracted by person, and he admires; the young woman is flattered by the admiration, and is agreeable; if she has any faults she is not likely to display them—not concealing them from hypocrisy, but because they are not called out. The young man falls in love, so does the young woman; and when once in love, they can no longer see faults; they marry, imagining that they have found perfection. In the blindness of love, each raises

the other to a standard of perfection, which human nature can never attain, and each becomes equally annoyed on finding, by degrees, that they were in error. The re-action takes place, and they then under-rate, as much as before they had over-rated, each other. Now, if two young people marry without this violence of passion, they do not expect to find each other perfect, and perhaps have a better chance of happiness."

"I don't agree with you," thought Gascoigne, "but as you appear to be as fond of argument as my friend Jack, I shall make no reply, lest there be no end to the story."

Don Rebiera proceeded.

"My mother, finding that my father preferred his closet and his books to gaiety and dissipation, soon left him to himself, and amused herself after her own fashion, but not until I was born, which was ten months after their marriage. My father was confiding, and pleased that my

mother should be amused, he indulged her in every thing. Time flew on, and I had arrived at my fifteenth year, and came home from my studies, it being intended that I should enter the army, which you are aware is generally the only profession embraced in this country by the heirs of noble families. Of course, I knew little of what had passed at home, but still I had occasionally heard my mother spoken lightly of, when I was not supposed to be present, and I always heard my father's name mentioned with compassion, as if an ill-used man, but I knew nothing more; still this was quite sufficient for a young man, whose blood boiled at the idea of any thing like a stigma being cast upon his family. I arrived at my father's, I found him at his books; I paid my respects to my mother, I found her with her confessor. I disliked the man at first sight; he was handsome, certainly: his forehead was high and white, his eyes large

and fiery, and his figure commanding; but there was a dangerous, proud look about him which disgusted me,—nothing like humility or devotion. I might have admired him as an officer commanding a regiment of cavalry, but as a churchman he appeared to be most misplaced. She named me with kindness, but he appeared to treat me with disdain; he spoke authoritatively to my mother, who appeared to yield implicitly, and I discovered that he was lord of the whole household. My mother, too, it was said, had given up gaieties and become devout. I soon perceived more than a common intelligence between them, and before I had been two months at home I had certain proofs of my father's dishonour; and, what was still more unfortunate for me, they were aware that such was the case. My first impulse was to acquaint my father; but, on consideration, I thought it better to say nothing, provided I could persuade

my mother to dismiss Father Ignatio. I took an opportunity when she was alone to express my indignation at her conduct, and to demand his immediate dismissal, as a condition of my not divulging her crime. She appeared frightened, and gave her consent; but I soon found that her confessor had more power with her than I had, and he remained. I now resolved to acquaint my father, and I roused him from his studies that he might listen to his shame. I imagined that he would have acted calmly and discreetly; but, on the contrary, his violence was without bounds, and I had the greatest difficulty from preventing his rushing with his sword to sacrifice them both. At last he contented himself by turning Father Ignatio out of the house in the most ignominious manner, and desiring my mother to prepare for seclusion in a convent for the remainder of her days.—But he fell their victim; three days afterwards,

as my mother was, by his directions, about to be removed, he was seized with convulsions and died. I need hardly say, that he was carried off by poison; this, however, could not be established till long afterwards. Before he died he seemed to be almost supernaturally prepared for an event which never came into my thoughts. He sent for another confessor, who drew up his confession in writing at his own request, and afterwards inserted it in his will. My mother remained in the house, and Father Ignatio had the insolence to return. I ordered him away, and he resisted. He was turned out by the servants. I had an interview with my mother, who defied me, and told me that I should soon have a brother to share in the succession. I felt that if so, it would be the illegitimate progeny of her adultery, and told her my opinion. She expressed her rage in the bitterest curses, and I left her. Shortly afterwards she quitted the

house and retired to another of our country-seats, where she lived with Father Ignatio as before. About four months afterwards, formal notice was sent to me of the birth of a brother; but, as when my father's will was opened, he there had inserted his confession, or the substance of it, in which he stated, that aware of my mother's guilt, and supposing that consequences might ensue, he solemnly declared before God that he had for years lived apart. I cared little for this communication—I contented myself with replying, that as the child belonged to the church, it had better be dedicated to its service.

"I had, however, soon reason to acknowledge the vengeance of my mother and her paramour. One night I was attacked by bravos; and had I not fortunately received assistance, I should have forfeited my life; as it was, I received a severe wound.

" Against attempts of that kind I took every precaution in future, but still every attempt was made to ruin my character, as well as to take my life. A young sister disappeared from a convent in my neighbourhood, and on the ground near the window from which she descended, was found a hat, recognized to be mine. I was proceeded against, and notwithstanding the strongest interest, it was with difficulty that the affair was arranged, although I had incontestably proved an *alibi*.

" A young man of rank was found murdered with a stiletto, known to be mine, buried in his bosom, and it was with difficulty that I could establish my innocence.

" Part of a banditti had been seized, and on being asked the name of their chief, when they received absolution, they confessed that I was the chief of the band.

" Every thing that could be attempted was

put into practice; and if I did not lose my life, at all events I was avoided by almost every body as a dangerous and doubtful character.

"At last a nobleman of rank, the father of Don Scipio, whom you disarmed, was assassinated; the bravos were taken, and they acknowledged that I was the person who hired them. I defended myself, but the king imposed upon me a heavy fine and banishment. I had just received the order, and was crying out against the injustice, and lamenting my hard fate, as I sat down to dinner. Latterly, aware of what my enemies would attempt, I had been accustomed to live much alone. My faithful valet Pedro was my only attendant. I was eating my dinner with little appetite, and had asked for some wine. Pedro went to the beaufet behind him, to give me what I required. Accidentally I lifted up my head, and there being a large pier-glass opposite to me, I saw the figure of my

valet, and that he was pouring a powder in the flagon of wine which he was about to present to me. I recollected the hat being found at the nunnery, and also the stiletto in the body of the young man.

"Like lightning it occurred to me, that I had been fostering the viper who had assisted to destroy me. He brought me the flagon. I rose, locked the door, and drawing my sword, I addressed him,

"'Villain! I know thee; down on your knees, for your life is forfeited.'

"He turned pale, trembled, and sank upon his knees.

"'Now, then,' continued I, 'you have but one chance — either drink off this flagon of wine, or I pass my sword through your body.— He hesitated, and I put the point to his breast, even pierced the flesh a quarter of an inch.

"'Drink,' cried I—'is it so very unjust an

order, to tell you to drink old wine? Drink,' continued I, 'or my sword does its duty.'

"He drank, and would then have quitted the room. 'No, no,' said I, 'you remain here, and the wine must have its effect. If I have wronged you I will make amends to you—but I am suspicious.'

"In about a quarter of an hour, during which time I paced up and down the room, with my sword drawn, my servant fell down, and cried in mercy to let him have a priest. I sent for my own confessor, and he then acknowledged that he was an agent of my mother and Father Ignatio, and had been the means of making it appear that I was the committer of all the crimes and murders which had been perpetrated by them, with a view to my destruction. A strong emetic having been administered to him, he partially revived, and was taken to Palermo, where he gave his evidence before he expired.'

" When this was made known, the king revoked his sentence, apologized to me, and I found that once more I was visited and courted by every body. My mother was ordered to be shut up in a convent, where she died, I trust, in grace, and Father Ignatio fled to Italy, and I have been informed is since dead.

" Having thus ridden myself of my principal enemies, I considered myself safe. I married the lady whom you have just seen, and before my eldest son was born, Don Silvio, for such was the name given to my asserted legitimate brother, came of age, and demanded his succession. Had he asked me for a proper support, as my uterine brother, I should not have refused; but that the son of Friar Ignatio, who had so often attempted my life, should, in case of my decease, succeed to the title and estates, was not to be borne. A law-suit was immediately commenced, which lasted four or five

years, during which Don Silvio married, and had a son, that young man whom you heard me address by the same name; but after much litigation, it was decided that my father's confessor and will had proved his illegitimacy, and the suit was in my favour. From that time to this, there has been a constant enmity. Don Silvio refused all my offers of assistance, and followed me with a pertinacity which often endangered my life. At last he fell by the hands of his own agents, who mistook him for me. Don Silvio died without leaving any provision for his family; his widow I pensioned, and his son I have had carefully brought up, and have indeed treated most liberally, but he appears to have imbibed the spirit of his father, and no kindness has been able to embue him with gratitude.

"He had lately been placed by me in the army, where he found out my two sons, and quarrelled with them both upon slight pretence,

but, in both instances, he was wounded and carried off the field.

" My two sons have been staying with me these last two months, and did not leave till yesterday. This morning Don Silvio, accompanied by Don Scipio, came to the house, and after accusing me of being the murderer of both their parents, drew their rapiers to assassinate me.—My wife and child hearing the noise, came down to my assistance.—You know the rest."

CHAPTER VI.

In which our hero is brought up all standing under a press of sail.

Our limits will not permit us to relate all that passed during our hero's stay of a fortnight at Don Rebiera's. He and Gascoigne were treated as if they were his own sons, and the kindness of the female part of the family was equally remarkable. Agnes, naturally perhaps, showed a preference or partiality for Jack; to which Gascoigne willingly submitted, as he felt that our hero had a prior and stronger claim, and during the time that they remained, a feeling of attachment was created between Agnes

and the philosopher, which, if not love, was at least something very near akin to it; but the fact was, that they were both much too young to think of marriage; and, although they walked and talked, and laughed and played together, they were always at home in time for their dinner. Still, the young lady thought she preferred our hero, even to her brothers, and Jack thought that the young lady was the prettiest and the kindest girl that he had ever met with. At the end of the fortnight, our two midshipmen took their leave, furnished with letters of recommendation to many of the first nobility in Palermo, and mounted on two fine mules with bell-bridles. The old Donna kissed them both —the Don showered down his blessings of good wishes, and Donna Agnes' lips trembled as she bade them adieu; and, as soon as they were gone, she went up to her chamber and wept. Jack also was very grave, and his eyes moist-

ened at the thoughts of leaving Agnes. Neither of them were aware, until the hour of parting, how much they had wound themselves together.

The first quarter of an hour our two midshipmen followed their guide in silence. Jack wished to be left to his own thoughts, and Gascoigne perceived it.

"Well, Easy," said Gascoigne, at last, "if I had been in your place, constantly in company of, and loved by that charming girl, I could never have torn myself away."

"Loved by her, Ned," replied Jack, "what makes you say that?"

"Because I am sure it was the case; she lived but in your presence. Why, if you were out of the room, she never spoke a word, but sat there as melancholy as a sick monkey—the moment you came in again, she beamed out as glorious as the sun, and was all life and spirit."

"I thought people were always melancholy when they were in love," replied Jack.

"When those that they love are out of their presence."

"Well, then, I am out of her presence, and I feel very melancholy, so I suppose, by your argument, I am in love. Can a man be in love without knowing it?"

"I really cannot say, Jack, I never was in love myself, but I've seen many others *spooney*. My time will come, I suppose, by-and-bye. They say, that for every man made, there is a woman also made to fit him, if he could only find her. Now, it's my opinion that you have found yours—I'll lay my life she's crying at this moment."

"Do you really think so, Ned? let's go back —poor little Agnes—let's go back; I feel I do love her, and I'll tell her so."

"Pooh, nonsense! it's too late now; you

should have told her that before, when you walked with her in the garden."

"But I did not know it, Ned. However, as you say, it would be foolish to turn back, so I'll write to her from Palermo."

Here an argument ensued upon love, which we shall not trouble the reader with, as it was not very profound, both sides knowing very little on the subject. It did, however, end with our hero being convinced that he was desperately in love, and he talked about giving up the service as soon as he arrived at Malta. It is astonishing what sacrifices midshipmen will make for the objects of their adoration.

It was not until late in the evening that our adventurers arrived at Palermo. As soon as they were lodged at the hotel, Gascoigne sat down and wrote a letter in their joint names to Don Rebiera, returning him many thanks for his great kindness, informing him of their safe

arrival, and trusting that they should soon meet again: and Jack took up his pen, and indicted a letter in Spanish to Agnes, in which he swore that neither tide nor time, nor water nor air, nor heaven nor earth, nor the first lieutenant nor his father, nor absence, nor death itself, should prevent him from coming back and marrying her, the first convenient opportunity, begging her to refuse a thousand offers, as come back he would, although there was no saying when. It was a perfect love-letter, that is to say, it was the essence of nonsense, but that made it perfect, for the greater the love the greater the folly.

These letters were consigned to the man who was sent as their guide, and also had to return with the mules. He was liberally rewarded; and, as Jack told him to be very careful of his letter, the Italian naturally concluded that it was to be delivered clandestinely, and he de-

livered it accordingly, at a time when Agnes was walking in the garden thinking of our hero. Nothing was more opportune than the arrival of the letter; Agnes ran to the pavilion, read it over twenty times, kissed it twenty times, and hid it in her bosom; sat for a few minutes in deep and placid thought, took the letter out of its receptacle, and read it over and over again. It was very bad Spanish and very absurd, but she thought it delightful, poetical, classical, sentimental, argumentative, convincing, incontrovertible, imaginative, and even grammatical, for if it was not good Spanish, there was no Spanish half so good. Alas! Agnes was, indeed, unsophisticated, to be in such ecstasies with a midshipman's love-letter. Once more she hastened to her room to weep, but it was from excess of joy and delight. The reader may think Agnes silly, but he must take into consideration the climate, and that she was not yet fifteen.

Our young gentlemen sent for a tailor and each ordered a new suit of clothes; they delivered their letters of recommendation and went to the banker to whom they were addressed by Don Rebiera.

"I shall draw for ten pounds, Jack," said Gascoigne, "on the strength of the shipwreck; I shall tell the truth, all except that we forgot to ask for leave, which I shall leave out; and I'm sure the story will be worth ten pounds. What shall you draw for, Jack?"

"I shall draw for two hundred pounds," replied Jack; "I mean to have a good cruise while I can."

"But will your governor stand that, Easy?"

"To be sure he will."

"Then you're right—he is a philosopher—I wish he'd teach mine, for he hates the sight of a bill."

"Then don't you draw, Ned, — I have

plenty for both. If every man had his equal share and rights in the world, you would be able to draw as much as I; and, as you cannot, upon the principles of equality, you shall have half."

"I really shall become a convert to your philosophy, Jack; it does not appear to be so nonsensical as I thought it. At all events, it has saved my old governor ten pounds, which he can ill afford, as a colonel on half-pay."

On their return to the inn, they found Don Philip and Don Martin, to whom Don Rebiera had written, who welcomed them with open arms. They were two very fine young men of eighteen and nineteen, who were finishing their education in the army. Jack asked them to dinner, and they and our hero soon became inseparable. They took him to all the theatres, the conversaziones of all the nobility, and, as Jack lost his money with good humour, and was

a very handsome fellow, he was everywhere well received and was made much of; many ladies made love to him, but Jack was only very polite, because he thought more and more of Agnes every day. Three weeks passed away like lightning, and neither Jack nor Gascoigne thought of going back. At last, one fine day, H. M. frigate Aurora anchored in the bay, and Jack and Gascoigne, who were at a party at the Duke of Pentaro's, met with the captain of the Aurora, who was also invited. The duchess introduced them to Captain Tartar, who, imagining them, from their being in plain clothes, to be young Englishmen of fortune on their travels, was very gracious and condescending. Jack was so pleased with his urbanity that he requested the pleasure of his company to dinner the next day; Captain Tartar accepted the invitation, and they parted, shaking hands, with many expressions of pleasure in having made his acquaint-

ance. Jack's party was rather large, and the dinner sumptuous. The Sicilian gentlemen did not drink much wine, but Captain Tartar liked his bottle, and although the rest of the company quitted the table to go to a ball given that evening by the Marquesa Novara, Jack was too polite not to sit it out with the captain; Gascoigne closed his chair to Jack's, who, he was afraid, being a little affected with the wine, would "let the cat out of the bag."

The captain was amazingly entertaining. Jack told him how happy he should be to see him at Forest Hill, which property the captain discovered to contain six thousand acres of land, and also that Jack was an only son; and Captain Tartar was quite respectful when he found that he was in such very excellent company. The captain of the frigate inquired of Jack what brought him out here, and Jack, whose prudence was departing, told him that he came

out in his majesty's ship Harpy. Gascoigne gave Jack a nudge, but it was of no use, for as the wine got into Jack's brain so did his notions of equality.

"Oh! Wilson gave you a passage, he's an old friend of mine."

"So he is of ours," replied Jack; "he's a devilish good sort of a fellow, Wilson."

"But where have you been since you came out?" inquired Captain Tartar.

"In the Harpy," replied Jack, "to be sure, I belong to her."

"You belong to her! in what capacity may I ask?" inquired Captain Tartar, in a much less respectful and confidential tone.

"Midshipman," replied Jack; "so is Mr. Gascoigne."

"Umph! you are on leave then."

"No, indeed," replied Jack; "I'll tell you how it is, my dear fellow."

"Excuse me one moment," replied Captain Tartar, rising up; "I must give some directions to my servant which I forgot."

Captain Tartar hailed his coxswain out of the window, gave orders just outside of the door, and then returned to the table. In the meantime, Gascoigne, who expected a breeze, had been cautioning Jack, in a low tone, at intervals, when Captain Tartar's back was turned; but it was useless, the extra quantity of wine had got into Jack's head, and he cared nothing for Gascoigne's remonstrances. When the captain resumed his seat at the table, Jack gave him the true narrative of all that had passed, to which his guest paid the greatest attention. Jack wound up his confidence by saying, that in a week or so he should go back to Don Rebiera and propose for Donna Agnes.

"Ah!" exclaimed Captain Tartar, drawing his breath with astonishment and compressing his lips.

"Tartar, the wine stands with you," said Jack, "allow me to help you."

Captain Tartar threw himself back in his chair and let all the air out of his chest with a sort of whistle, as if he could hardly contain himself.

"Have you had wine enough?" said Jack very politely; "if so, we will go to the Marquesa's."

The coxswain came to the door, touched his hat to the captain, and looked significantly.

"And so, sir," cried Captain Tartar, in a voice of thunder, rising from his chair, "you're a d—d runaway midshipman, who, if you belonged to my ship, instead of marrying Donna Agnes, I would marry you to the gunner's daughter, by G—d! Two midshipmen sporting plain clothes in the best society in Palermo, and having the impudence to ask a post-captain to dine with them! To ask me, and address me as *Tartar*,

and *my dear fellow!* You infernal young scamps!" continued Captain Tartar, now boiling with rage, and striking his fist on the table so as to set all the glasses waltzing.

"Allow me to observe, sir," said Jack, who was completely sobered by the address, "that we do not belong to your ship, and that we are in plain clothes."

"In plain clothes—midshipmen in mufti—yes, you are so; a couple of young swindlers, without a sixpence in your pockets, passing yourselves off as young men of fortune, and walking off through the window without paying your bill."

"Do you mean to call me a swindler, sir?" replied Jack.

"Yes, sir, you——"

"Then you lie," exclaimed our hero, in a rage." I am a gentleman, sir—I am sorry I cannot pay you the same compliment."

The astonishment and rage of Captain Tar-

tar took away his breath. He tried to speak, but could not—he gasped, and gasped, and then sat or almost fell down in his chair—at last he recovered himself.

"Matthews—Matthews!"

"Sir," replied the coxswain, who had remained at the door.

"The sergeant of marines."

"Here he is, sir."

The sergeant entered and raised the back of his hand to his hat.

"Bring your marines in—take charge of these two. Directly you are on board, put them both legs in irons."

The marines with their bayonets walked in and took possession of our hero and Gascoigne.

"Perhaps, sir," replied Jack, who was now cool again, "you will permit us to pay our bill before we go on board. We are no swindlers, and it is rather a heavy one—or, as you have

taken possession of our persons, you will, perhaps, do us the favour to discharge it yourself;" and Jack threw on the table a heavy purse of dollars. "I have only to observe, Captain Tartar, that I wish to be very liberal to the waiters."

"Sergeant, let them pay their bill," said Captain Tartar, in a more subdued tone—taking his hat and sword and walking out of the room.

"By heavens, Easy, what have you done?—you will be tried by a court-martial, and turned out of the service."

"I hope so," replied Jack; "I was a fool to come into it. But he called me a swindler, and I would give the same answer to-morrow."

"If you are ready, gentlemen," said the sergeant, who had been long enough with Captain Tartar to be aware that to be punished by him was no proof of fault having been committed.

"I will go and pack up our things, Easy, while you pay the bill," said Gascoigne. "Marine, you had better come with me."

In less than half-an-hour, our hero and his comrade, instead of finding themselves at the Marquesa's ball, found themselves very comfortably in irons under the half deck of H. M. frigate Aurora.

We shall leave them and return to Captain Tartar, who had proceeded to the ball, to which he had been invited. On his entering he was accosted by Don Martin and Don Philip, who inquired what had become of our hero and his friend. Captain Tartar, who was in no very good humour, replied briskly, "that they were on board his ship in irons."

"In irons! for what?" exclaimed Don Philip.

"Because, sir, they are a couple of young scamps who have introduced themselves into the best company, passing themselves off as people

of consequence, when they are only a couple of midshipmen who have run away from their ship."

Now the Rebieras knew very well that Jack and his friend were midshipmen; but this did not appear to them any reason why they should not be considered as gentlemen and treated accordingly.

"Do you mean to say, signor," said Don Philip, "that you have accepted their hospitality, laughed, talked, walked arm-in-arm with them, pledged them in wine, as we have seen you this evening, and after they have confided in you that you have put them in irons?"

"Yes, sir, I do," replied Captain Tartar.

"Then, by Heaven, you have my defiance, and you are no gentleman!" replied Don Philip, the elder.

"And I repeat my brother's words, sir," cried Don Martin.

The two brothers felt so much attachment

for our hero who had twice rendered such signal service to their family, that their anger was without bounds.

In every other service but the English navy, there is not that power of grossly insulting and then sheltering yourself under your rank; nor is it necessary for the discipline of any service. To these young officers, if the power did exist, the use of such power under such circumstances appeared monstrous, and they were determined, at all events, to show to Captain Tartar, that in society, at least, it could be resented. They collected their friends, told them what had passed, and begged them to circulate it through the room. This was soon done, and Captain Tartar found himself avoided. He went up to the Marquesa and spoke to her—she turned her head the other way. He addressed a count he had been conversing with the night before—he turned short round upon his heel, while Don Philip and Don Mar-

tin walked up and down talking, so that he might hear what they said, and looking at him with eyes flashing with indignation. Captain Tartar left the ball-room and returned to the inn, more indignant than ever. When he rose the next morning he was informed that a gentleman wished to speak with him; he sent up his card as Don Ignatio Verez, colonel commanding the fourth regiment of infantry. On being admitted, he informed Captain Tartar that Don Philip de Ribiera wished to have the pleasure of crossing swords with him, and requested to know when it would be convenient for Captain Tartar to meet him.

It was not in Captain Tartar's nature to refuse a challenge, his courage was unquestionable, but he felt indignant that a midshipman should be the cause of his getting into such a scrape. He accepted the challenge, but having no knowledge of the small sword, refused to

fight unless with pistols. To this the colonel raised no objections, and Captain Tartar dispatched his coxswain with a note to his second lieutenant, for he was not on good terms with his first. The meeting took place—at the first fire, the ball of Don Philip passed through Captain Tartar's brain, and he instantly fell dead. The second lieutenant hastened on board to report the fatal result of the meeting, and shortly after, Don Philip and his brother, with many of their friends, went off in the governor's barge to condole with our hero.

The first lieutenant, now captain *pro tempore*, received them graciously, and listened to their remonstrances relative to our hero and Gascoigne.

"I have never been informed by the captain of the grounds of complaint against the young gentlemen," replied he, "and have therefore no charge to prefer against them. I shall there-

fore order them to be liberated. But, as I learn that they are officers belonging to one of his Majesty's ships lying at Malta, I feel it my duty, as I sail immediately, to take them there and send them on board of their own ship."

Jack and Gascoigne were then taken out of irons and permitted to see Don Philip, who informed them that he had revenged the insult, but Jack and Gascoigne did not wish to go on shore again after what had passed. After an hour's conversation, and assurances of continued friendship, Don Philip, his brother, and their friends, took leave of our two midshipmen and rowed on shore.

And now we must be serious.

We do not write these novels merely to amuse, we have always had it in our view to instruct, and it must not be supposed that we have no other end in view than to make the reader laugh. If we were to write an elaborate work telling truths, and plain truths, confining our-

selves only to point out errors and to demand reform, it would not be read; we have therefore selected this light and trifling species of writing, as it is by many denominated, as a channel through which we may convey wholesome advice in a palatable shape. If we would point out an error, we draw a character, and although that character appears to weave naturally into the tale of fiction, it becomes as much a beacon, as it is a vehicle of amusement. We consider this to be the true art of novel writing, and that crime and folly and error can be as severely lashed, as virtue and morality can be upheld, by a series of amusing causes and effects, that entice the reader to take a medicine, which although rendered agreeable to the palate, still produces the same internal benefit as if it had been presented to him in its crude state, in which it would either be refused or nauseated.

In our naval novels, we have often pointed out the errors which have existed, and still do exist, in a service which is an honour to its country; for what institution is there on earth that is perfect, or into which, if it once was perfect, abuses will not creep? Unfortunately others have written to decry the service, and many have raised up their voices against our writings, because they felt that in exposing error, we were exposing them. But to this we have been indifferent; we felt that we were doing good, and we have continued. To prove that we are correct in asserting that we have done good, we will, out of several, state one single case.

In the "King's Own," a captain, when requested to punish a man *instanter* for a fault committed, replies that he never has and never will punish a man until twenty-four hours after the offence, that he may not be induced by the

anger of the moment to award a severer punishment than in his cooler moments he might think commensurate—and that he wished that the Admiralty would give out an order to that effect.

Some time after the publication of that work, the order was given by the Admiralty, forbidding the punishment until a certain time had elapsed after the offence, and we had the pleasure of knowing from the first lord of the Admiralty of the time, that it was in consequence of the suggestion in the novel.

If our writings had effected nothing else, we might still lay down our pen with pride and satisfaction; but they have done more, much more, and while they have amused the reader, they have improved the service; they have held up in their characters a mirror, in which those who have been in error may see their own deformity, and many hints which have been given

have afterwards returned to the thoughts of those who have had influence, have been considered as their own ideas, and have been acted upon. The conduct of Captain Tartar may be considered as a libel on the service—is it not. The fault of Captain Tartar was not in sending them on board, or even putting them in irons as deserters, although, under the circumstances, he might have shown more delicacy. The fault was in stigmatizing a young man as a swindler, and the punishment awarded to the error is intended to point out the moral, that such an abuse of power should be severely visited. The greatest error now in our service is the disregard shown to the feelings of the junior officers in the language of their superiors: that an improvement has taken place I grant, but that it still exists, to a degree injurious to the service, I know too well. The articles of war, as our hero was informed by his captain, were equally binding on

officers and crew; but what a dead letter do they become if officers are permitted to break them with impunity! The captain of a ship will turn the hands up to punishment, read the article of war for the transgressing of which the punishment is inflicted, and to show at that time their high respect for the articles of war, the captain and every officer take off their hats. The moment the hands are piped down, the second article of war, which forbids all swearing, &c., in derogation of God's honour, is immediately disregarded. We are not strait-laced, we care little about an oath as a mere *expletive;* we refer now to swearing at *others*, to insulting their feelings grossly by coarse and intemperate language. We would never interfere with a man for d—g his *own* eyes, but we deny the right of his d—g those of *another*.

The rank of a master in the service is above that of a midshipman, but still the midshipman

is a gentleman by birth, and the master, generally speaking, is not. Even at this moment, in the service, if the master were to d—n the eyes of a midshipman, and tell him that he was a liar, would there be any redress, or if so, would it be commensurate to the insult? If a midshipman were to request a court martial, would it be granted?—certainly not: and yet this is a point of more importance than may be conceived. Our service has been wonderfully improved since the peace, and those who now are permitted to enter it must be gentlemen. We know that even now there are many who cry out against this as dangerous and injurious to the service; as if education spoilt an officer, and the scion of an illustrious house would not be more careful to uphold an escutcheon without blemish for centuries, than one who has little more than brute courage; but those who argue thus are the very people who are injurious to the service,

for they can have no other reason, except that they wish that the juniors may be tyrannized over with impunity.

Be it remembered that these are not the observations of a junior officer, smarting under insult—they are the result of deep and calm reflection. We have arrived to that grade, that, although we have the power to inflict, we are too high to receive insult, but we have not forgotten how our young blood has boiled when wanton, reckless, and cruel torture has been heaped upon our feelings, merely because, as a junior officer, we were not in a position to retaliate or even to reply. And another evil is, that this *great error* is *disseminated.* In observing on it, in one of our works, called "Peter Simple," we have put the following true observation in the mouth of O'Brien. Peter observes, in his simple, right-minded way,

"I should think, O'Brien, that the very cir-

cumstance of having had your feelings so often wounded by such language when you were a junior officer, would make you doubly careful not to use it towards others, when you had advanced in the service?"

"Peter, that's just the first feeling, which wears away after a time, till at last, your own sense of indignation becomes blunted, and becomes indifferent to it; you forget also, that you wound the feelings of others, and carry the habit with you, to the great injury and disgrace of the service."

Let it not be supposed that in making these remarks we want to cause litigation, or insubordination. On the contrary, we assert that this error is the cause, and eventually will be much more the cause, of insubordination; for as the junior officers who enter the service are improved so will they resist it. The complaint here is more against the officers, than the cap-

tains, whose power has been perhaps already too much curtailed by late regulations; that power must remain, for although there may be some few who are so perverted as to make those whom they command uncomfortable, in justice to the service we are proud to assert, that the majority acknowledge, by their conduct, that the greatest charm attached to power, is to be able to make so many people happy.

CHAPTER VII.

Our hero is sick with the service, but recovers with proper medicine. An argument, ending as most do, in a blow up. Mesty lectures upon craniology.

The day after the funeral, H. M. ship Aurora sailed for Malta, and on her arrival the acting captain sent our two midshipmen on board the Harpy without any remark, except "victualled the day discharged," as they had been borne on the ship's books as supernumeraries.

Mr. James, who was acting in the Aurora, was anxious to join the admiral at Toulon, and intended to sail the next day. He met Captain Wilson at the governor's table, and stated that

Jack and Gascoigne had been put in irons by order of Captain Tartar; his suspicions, and the report that the duel had in consequence taken place; but Gascoigne and Jack had both agreed that they would not communicate the events of their cruise to anybody on board of the Aurora; and therefore nothing else was known, except that they must have made powerful friends somehow or another; and there appeared in the conduct of Captain Tartar, as well as in the whole transaction, somewhat of a mystery.

"I should like to know what happened to my friend Jack, who fought the duel," said the governor, who had laughed at it till he held his sides; "Wilson, do bring him here to-morrow morning, and let us have his story."

"I am afraid of encouraging him, Sir Thomas—he is much too wild already. I told you of his first cruise. He has nothing but adventures, and they all end too favourably."

"Well, but you can send for him here and blow him up, just as well as in your own cabin, and then we will have the truth out of him."

"That you certainly will," replied Captain Wilson, "for he tells it plainly enough."

"Well, to oblige me, send for him—I don't see he was much to blame in absconding, as it appears he thought he would be hung—I want to see the lad."

"Well, governor, if you wish it," replied Captain Wilson, who wrote a note to Mr. Sawbridge, requesting he would send Mr. Easy to him at the governor's house at ten o'clock in the morning.

Jack made his appearance in his uniform—he did not much care for what was said to him, as he was resolved to leave the service. He had been put in irons, and the iron had *entered into his soul.*

Mr. Sawbridge had gone on shore about an

hour before Jack had been sent on board, and he had remained on shore all the night. He did not therefore see Jack but for a few minutes, and thinking it his duty to say nothing to him at first, or to express his displeasure, he merely observed to him that the captain would speak to him as soon as he came on board. As Gascoigne and our hero did not know how far it might be safe, even at Malta, to acknowledge to what occurred on board of the speronare, which might get wind, they did not even tell their messmates, resolving only to confide it to the captain.

When Jack was ushered into the presence of the captain, he found him sitting with the governor, and the breakfast on the table ready for them. Jack walked in with courage, but respectfully. He was fond of Captain Wilson, and wished to show him respect. Captain Wilson addressed him, pointed out that he had

committed a great error in fighting a duel, a greater error in demeaning himself by fighting the purser's steward, and still greater in running away from his ship. Jack looked respectfully to Captain Wilson, acknowledged that he had done wrong, and promised to be more careful another time, if Captain Wilson would look over it.

"Captain Wilson, allow me to plead for the young gentleman," said the governor; "I am convinced that it has only been an error in judgment."

"Well, Mr. Easy, as you express your contrition, and the governor interferes in your behalf, I shall take no more notice of this; but recollect, Mr. Easy, that you have occasioned me a great deal of anxiety by your mad pranks, and I trust another time you will remember that I am too anxious for your welfare not to be uncomfortable when you run such risks. You

may now go on board to your duty, and tell Mr. Gascoigne to do the same; and pray let us hear of no more duels or running away."

Jack, whose heart softened at this kind treatment, did not venture to speak; he made his bow, and was about to quit the room, when the governor said,

"Mr. Easy, you have not breakfasted."

"I have, sir," replied Jack, "before I came on shore."

"But a midshipman can always eat two breakfasts, particularly when his own comes first—so sit down and breakfast with us—it's all over now."

"Even if it was not," replied Captain Wilson, laughing, "I doubt whether it would spoil Mr. Easy's breakfast;—come, Mr. Easy, sit down."

Jack bowed, and took his chair, and proved that his lecture had not taken away his appetite.

When breakfast was over, Captain Wilson observed,

"Mr. Easy, you have generally a few adventures to speak of when you return, will you tell the governor and me what has taken place since you left us."

"Certainly, sir," replied Jack; "but I venture to request that it may be under the promise of secrecy, for it's rather important to me and Gascoigne."

"Yes, if secrecy is really necessary, my boy; but I'm the best judge of that," replied the governor.

Jack then entered into a detail of his adventures, which we have already described, much to the astonishment of the governor and his captain, and concluded his narration by stating that he wanted to leave the service; he hoped that Captain Wilson would discharge him and send him home.

"Pooh, nonsense!" said the governor, "you sha'n't leave the Mediterranean while I am here. No, no; you must have more adventures, and come back and tell them to me. And recollect, my lad, that whenever you come to Malta, there is a bed at the governor's house, and a seat at his table, always ready for you."

"You are very kind, Sir Thomas," replied Jack, "but—"

"No buts at all, sir—you sha'n't leave the service; besides, recollect that I can ask for leave of absence for you to go and see Donna Agnes—ay, and send you there too."

Captain Wilson also remonstrated with our hero, and he gave up the point. It was harsh treatment which made him form the resolution, it was kindness which overcame it.

"With your permission, Captain Wilson, Mr. Easy shall dine with us to-day and bring Gascoigne with him; you shall first scold him, and

I'll console him with a good dinner—and, boy, don't be afraid to tell your story every where, sit down and tell it at Nix Mangare stairs, if you please,—I'm governor here."

Jack made his obeisance and departed.

"The lad must be treated kindly, Captain Wilson," said the governor; "he would be a loss to the service. Good heavens, what adventures! and how honestly he tells every thing. I shall ask him to stay with me for the time you are here, if you will allow me: I want to make friends with him; he must not leave the service."

Captain Wilson, who felt that kindness and attention would be more effectual with our hero than any other measures, gave his consent to the governor's proposition. So Jack ate at the governor's table, and took lessons in Spanish and Italian until the Harpy had been refitted, after heaving down. Before she was ready a

vessel arrived from the fleet, directing Captain Wilson to repair to Mahon, and send a transport, lying there, to procure live bullocks for the fleet. Jack did not join his ship very willingly, but he had promised the governor to remain in the service, and he went on board the evening before she sailed. He had been living so well that he had, at first, a horror of midshipman's fare, but a good appetite seasons every thing, and Jack soon complained that there was not enough. He was delighted to see Jolliffe and Mesty after so long an absence; he laughed at the boatswain's cheeks, inquired after the purser's steward's shot-holes, shook hands with Gascoigne and his other messmates, gave Vigors a thrashing, and then sat down to supper.

"Ah, Massa Easy, why you take a cruise without me?" said Mesty; "dat very shabby—

by de power, but I wish I was there; you ab too much danger, Massa Easy, without Mesty, any how."

The next day the Harpy sailed, and Jack went to his duty. Mr. Asper borrowed ten pounds, and our hero kept as much watch as he pleased, which, as watching did not please him, was very little. Mr. Sawbridge had long conversations with our hero, pointing out to him the necessity of discipline and obedience in the service, and that there was no such thing as equality, and that the rights of man secured to every one the property which he held in possession. "According to your ideas, Mr Easy, a man has no more right to his wife than any thing else, and any other man may claim her." Jack thought of Agnes, and he made matrimony an exception, as he continued to argue the point; but although he argued, still his phi-

losophy was almost upset at the idea of any one disputing with him the rights of man, with respect to Agnes.

The Harpy made the African coast, the wind continued contrary, and they were baffled for many days; at last they espied a brig under the land, about sixteen miles off; her rig and appearance made Captain Wilson suspect that she was a privateer of some description or another, but it was calm, and they could not approach her. Nevertheless, Captain Wilson thought it his duty to examine her; so at ten o'clock at night the boats were hoisted out: as this was merely intended for a reconnoitre, for there was no saying what she might be, Mr. Sawbridge did not go. Mr. Asper was in the sick list, so Mr. Smallsole the master had the command of the expedition. Jack asked Mr. Sawbridge to let him have charge of one of the boats. Mr. Jolliffe and Mr. Vigors went in the pinnace with the master. The gunner had the

charge of one cutter, and our hero had the command of the other. Jack, although not much more than seventeen, was very strong and tall for his age, indeed, he was a man grown, and shaved twice a week. His only object in going was to have a yarn for the governor when he returned to Malta. Mesty went with him, and, as the boat shoved off, Gascoigne slipped in, telling Jack that he was come to take care of him, for which considerate kindness Jack expressed his warmest thanks. The orders to the master were very explicit; he was to reconnoitre the vessel, and if she proved heavily armed not to attack, for she was embayed, and could not escape the Harpy as soon as there was wind. If not armed he was to board her, but he was to do nothing till the morning: the reason for sending the boats away so soon was, that the men might not suffer from the heat of the sun during the day-time, which was excessive, and had already put many men on the sick-list.

The boats were to pull to the bottom of the bay, not to go so near as to be discovered, and then drop their grapnels till daylight. The orders were given to Mr. Smallsole in presence of the other officers who were appointed to the boats, that there might be no mistake, and the boats then shoved off. After a three hours' pull, they arrived to where the brig lay becalmed, and as they saw no lights moving on board, they supposed they were not seen. They dropped their grapnels in about seven fathoms water, and waited for daylight. When Jack heard Captain Wilson's orders that they were to lie at anchor till daylight, he had sent down Mesty for fishing-lines, as fresh fish is always agreeable in a midshipman's berth: he and Gascoigne amused themselves this way, and as they pulled up the fish they entered into an argument, and Mr. Smallsole ordered them to be silent. The point which they discussed was relative to boat service;

Gascoigne insisted that the boats should all board at once—while our hero took it into his head that it was better they should come up one after another; a novel idea, but Jack's ideas on most points were singular.

"If you throw your whole force upon the decks at once, you overpower them," observed Gascoigne; "if you do not, you are beaten in detail."

"Very true," replied Jack, "supposing that you have an overpowering force, or they are not prepared; but recollect, that if they are, the case is altered; for instance, as to fire arms—they fire theirs at the first boat, and they have not time to reload, when the second comes up with its fire reserved; every fresh boat arriving adds to the courage of those who have boarded, and to the alarm of those who defend; the men come on fresh and fresh. Depend upon it, Gascoigne, there is nothing like a *corps de reserve*."

"Will you keep silence in your boat, Mr. Easy, or will you not?" cried the master; "you're a disgrace to the service, sir."

"Thank ye, sir," replied Jack in a low tone. "I've another bite, Ned."

Jack and his comrade continued to fish in silence till the day broke. The mist rolled off the stagnant water, and discovered the brig, who, as soon as she perceived the boats, threw out the French tricolor and fired a gun of defiance.

Mr. Smallsole was undecided; the gun fired was not a heavy one, and so Mr. Jolliffe remarked; the men, as usual, anxious for the attack, asserted the same, and Mr. Smallsole, afraid of retreating from the enemy and being afterwards despised by the ship's company, ordered the boats to weigh their grapnels.

"Stop a moment, my lads," said Jack to his men, "I've got a bite." The men laughed at

Jack's taking it so easy, but he was their pet; and they did stop for him to pull up his fish, intending to pull up to the other boats and recover their loss of a few seconds.

"I've hooked him now," said Jack; "you may up with the grapnel while I up with the fish." But this delay gave the other boats a start of a dozen strokes of their oars, which was a distance not easy to be regained.

"They will be aboard before us, sir," said the coxswain.

"Never mind that," replied Jack; "some one must be last."

"But not the boat I am in," replied Gascoigne; "if I could help it."

"I tell you," replied Jack, "we shall be the *corps de reserve*, and have the honour of turning the scale in our favour."

"Give way, my lads," cried Gascoigne, perceiving the other boats still kept their distance

ahead of them, which was about a cable's length.

"Gascoigne, I command the boat," said Jack, "and I do not wish my men to board without any breath in their bodies—that's a very unwise plan. A steady pull, my lads, and not too much exertion."

"By heavens, they'll take the vessel before we get alongside."

"Even if they should, I am right, am I not, Mesty?"

"Yes, Massa Easy, you very right—suppose they take vessel without you, they no want you — suppose they want you, you come." And the Négro, who had thrown his jacket off, bared his arm, as if he intended mischief.

The first cutter, commanded by the gunner, now gained upon the launch, and was three boat's lengths ahead of her when she came alongside. The brig poured in her broadside—

it was well directed, and down went the boat.

"Cutter's sunk," exclaimed Gascoigne, "by heavens! Give way my men."

"Now, don't you observe, that had we all three been pulling up together, the broadside would have sunk us all?" said Jack, very composedly.

"There's board in the launch—give way, my men, give way," said Gascoigne, stamping with impatience.

The reception was evidently warm; by the time that the launch had poured in her men the second cutter was close under the brig's quarter—two more strokes and she was alongside; when of a sudden, a tremendous explosion took place on the deck of the vessel, and bodies and fragments were hurled up in the air. So tremendous was the explosion, that the men of the second cutter, as if transfixed,

simultaneously stopped pulling, their eyes directed to the volumes of smoke which poured through the ports and hid the whole of the masts and rigging of the vessel.

"Now's your time, my lads, give way and alongside," cried our hero.

The men, reminded by his voice, obeyed—but the impetus already given to the boat was sufficient. Before they could drop their oars in the water they grazed against the vessel's sides, and, following Jack, were in a few seconds on the quarter deck of the vessel. A dreadful sight presented itself—the whole deck was black and corpses lay strewed; their clothes on them still burning, and among the bodies lay fragments of what once were men.

The capstern was unshipped and turned over on its side—the binnacles were in remnants, and many of the ropes ignited. There was not one person left on deck to oppose them.

As they afterwards learnt from some of the men who had saved their lives by remaining below, the French captain had seen the boats before they anchored, and had made every preparation; he had filled a large ammunition chest with cartridges for the guns, that they might not have to hand them up. The conflict between the men of the pinnace and the crew of the vessel was carried on near the capstern, and a pistol fired, had accidentally communicated with the powder, which blew up in the very centre of the dense and desperate struggle.

The first object was to draw water and extinguish the flames which were spreading over the vessel; as soon as that was accomplished, our hero went aft to the taffrail, and looked for the cutter which had been sunk—"Gascoigne, jump into the boat with four men—I see the cutter floats a quarter of a mile a-stern: there may be some one alive yet. I think now I see a head or two."

Gascoigne hastened away, and soon returned with three of the cutter's men; the rest had sunk, probably killed or wounded by the discharge of the broadside.

"Thank God, there's three saved!" said Jack, "for we have lost too many. We must now see if any of these poor fellows are yet alive, and clear the decks of the remnants of those who have been blown to pieces. I say, Ned, where should we have been if we had boarded with the pinnace?"

"You always fall upon your feet, Easy," replied Gascoigne; "but that does not prove that you are right."

"I see there's no convincing you, Ned, you are so confoundedly fond of argument. However, I've no time to argue now—we must look to these poor fellows; some are still alive."

Body after body was thrown through the ports, the habiliments, in most cases, enabling

them to distinguish whether it was that of a departed friend or foe.

Jack turned round and observed Mesty with his foot on a head which had been blown from the trunk.

"What are you about, Mesty?"

"Massa Easy, I look at dis, and I tink it Massa Vigors' head, and den I tink dis skull of his enemy nice present make to little Massa Gossett; and den I tink again, and I say, no, he dead and nebber thrash any more—so let him go overboard."

Jack turned away, forgiving Vigors in his heart; he thought of the petty animosities of a midshipman's berth, as he looked at the blackened portion of a body, half an hour before possessing intellect.

"Massa Easy," said Mesty, "I tink you say right, any how, when you say forgive: den, Massa Vigors," continued Mesty, taking up the head

by the singed hair, and tossing it out of the port; "you really very bad man—but Ashantee forgive you."

"Here's somebody alive," said Gascoigne to Jack, examining a body, the face of which was black as a cinder and not to be recognised, "and he is one of our men too, by his dress."

Our hero went up to examine and to assist Gascoigne in disengaging the body from a heap of ropes and half-burnt tarpaulings with which it was entangled. Mesty followed, and looking at the lower extremities said, "Massa Easy, dat Massa Jolliffe, I know him trousers; marine taylor say he patch um for ever, and so old dat de thread no hold: yesterday he hab dis patch put in, and marine taylor say he be d—n if he patch any more, please nobody."

Mesty was right, it was poor Jolliffe, whose face was burnt as black as a coal by the explosion. He had also lost three fingers of the left

hand, but as soon as he was brought out on the deck he appeared to recover, and pointed to his mouth for water, which was instantly procured.

"Mesty," said Jack, "I leave you in charge of Mr. Jolliffe; take every care of him till I can come back."

The investigation was then continued, and four English sailors found who might be expected to recover, as well as about the same number of Frenchmen; the remainder of the bodies were then thrown overboard. The hat only of the master was picked up between the guns, and there were but eleven Frenchmen found below.

The vessel was the Franklin, a French privateer, of ten guns and sixty-five men, of which, eight men were away in prizes. The loss on the part of the vessel was forty-six killed and wounded. On that of the Harpy, it was five drowned in the cutter, and eighteen blown up belonging to the pinnace, out of which total of

twenty-three, they had only Mr. Jolliffe and five seamen alive.

"The Harpy is standing in with a breeze from the offing," said Gascoigne to Easy.

"So much the better, for I'm sick of this, Ned, there is something so horrible in it, and I wish I was on board again. I have just been to Jolliffe; he can speak a little; I think he will recover. I hope so, poor fellow, he will then obtain his promotion, for he is the commanding officer of all us who are left."

"And if he does," replied Gascoigne, "he can swear that it was by having been blown up which spoilt his beauty—but here comes the Harpy. I have been looking for an English ensign to hoist over the French, but cannot find one, so I hoist a wheft over it, that will do."

The Harpy was soon hove-to close to the brig, and Jack went on board in the cutter to report what had taken place. Captain Wilson was

much vexed and grieved at the loss of so many men: fresh hands were put in the cutter to man the pinnace, and he and Sawbridge both went on board to witness the horrible effects of the explosion as described by our hero.

Jolliffe and the wounded men were taken on board, and all of them recovered. We have before stated how disfigured the countenance of poor Mr. Jolliffe had been by the small pox—so severely was it burned that the whole of the countenance came off in three weeks like a mask, and every one declared that, seamed as it still was, Mr. Jolliffe was better looking than he was before. It may be as well here to state, that Mr. Jolliffe not only obtained his promotion but a pension for his wounds, and retired from the service. He was still very plain, but as it was known that he had been blown up, the loss of his eye as well as the scars on his face were all put down to the same accident, and he

excited interest as a gallant and maimed officer. He married and lived contented and happy to a good old age.

The Harpy proceeded with her prize to Mahon; Jack, as usual, obtained a great deal of credit; whether he deserved it, or whether, as Gascoigne observed, he always fell upon his feet, the reader may decide from our narrative; perhaps there was a little of both. The seamen of the Harpy, if summoned in a hurry, used very often to reply, "Stop a minute, I've got a bite"—as for Jack he often said to himself "I've a famous good yarn for the governor."

CHAPTER VIII.

Jack goes on another cruise—Love and Diplomacy—Jack proves himself too clever for three, and upsets all the arrangements of the high contracting powers.

A FEW days after the arrival of the Harpy at Port Mahon, a cutter came in with dispatches from the admiral. Captain Wilson found that he was posted into the Aurora frigate, in which a vacancy had been made by the result of our hero's transgressions.

Mr. Sawbridge was raised to the rank of commander, and appointed to the command of the Harpy. The admiral informed Captain

Wilson that he must detain the Aurora until the arrival of another frigate, hourly expected, and then she would be sent down to Mahon for him to take the command of her. Further, he intimated that a supply of live bullocks would be very agreeable, and begged that he would send to Tetuan immediately.

Captain Wilson had lost so many officers that he knew not whom to send; indeed, now he was no longer in command of the Harpy, and there was but one lieutenant, and no master or master's mate. Gascoigne and Jack were the only two serviceable midshipmen, and he was afraid to trust them on any expedition in which expedition was required.

"What shall we do, Sawbridge? shall we send Easy or Gascoigne, or both, or neither?—for if the bullocks are not forthcoming, the admiral will not let them off as we do."

"We must send somebody, Wilson," replied Cap-

tain Sawbridge, "and it is the custom to send two officers, as one receives the bullocks on board, while the other attends to the embarkation."

"Well then, send both, Sawbridge, but lecture them well first."

"I don't think they can get into any mischief there," replied Sawbridge; "and it's such a hole that they will be glad to get away from it."

Easy and Gascoigne were summoned, listened very respectfully to all Captain Sawbridge said, promised to conduct themselves with the utmost propriety, received a letter to the vice-consul, and were sent with their hammocks and chests in the cabin, on board the Eliza Ann, brig, of two hundred and sixteen tons, chartered by government—the master and crew of which were all busy forward heaving up their anchors.

The master of the transport came aft to receive them: he was a short red-haired young

man, with hands as broad as the flappers of a turtle; he was broad-faced, broad-shouldered, well freckled and pug-nosed; but if not very handsome he was remarkably good-humoured. As soon as the chests and hammocks were on the deck, he told them that when he could get the anchor up and make sail, he would give them some bottled porter. Jack proposed that he should get the porter up, and they would drink it while he got the anchor up, as it would save time.

"It may save time mayhap, but it won't save porter," replied the master; "however, you shall have it."

He called the boy, ordered him to bring up the porter, and then went forward. Jack made the boy bring up two chairs, put the porter on the companion hatch, and he and Gascoigne sat down. The anchor was weighed and the transport ran out under her foretopsail, as they were

light-handed, and had to secure the anchor. The transport passed within ten yards of the Harpy, and Captain Sawbridge, when he perceived the two midshipmen taking it so very easy, sitting in their chairs with their legs crossed, arms folded, and their porter before them, had a very great mind to order the transport to heave-to, but he could spare no other officer, so he walked away, saying to himself, "There'll be another yarn for the governor, or I'm mistaken."

As soon as sail was made on the transport, the master, whose name was Hogg, came up to our hero, and asked him how he found the porter. Jack declared that he never could venture an opinion upon the first bottle—"So, Captain Hogg, we'll trouble you for a second"—after which they troubled him for a third—begged for a fourth—must drink his health in a fifth, and finally, pointed out the propriety of making up the half-dozen. By this time they found them-

selves rather light-headed, so desiring Captain Hogg to keep a sharp look-out and not to call them on any account whatever, they retired to their hammocks.

The next morning they awoke late; the breeze was fresh and fair: they requested Captain Hogg not to consider the expense, as they would pay for all they ate and drank, and all he did, into the bargain, and promised him a fit-out when they got to Tetuan.

What with this promise and calling him captain, our hero and Gascoigne won the master's heart, and being a very good-tempered fellow, they did what they pleased. Jack also tossed a doubloon to the men for them to drink on their arrival, and all the men of the transport were in a transport, at Jack's coming to "reign over them." It must be acknowledged that Jack's reign was, for the most part of it, "happy and glorious." At last they arrived at Tetuan, and

our Pylades and Orestes went on shore to call upon the vice-consul, accompanied by Captain Hogg. They produced their credentials and demanded bullocks. The vice-consul was a very young man, short and thin and light-haired; his father had held the situation before him, and he had been appointed his successor because nobody else had thought the situation worth applying for. Nevertheless Mr. Hicks was impressed with the immense responsibility of his office. It was, however, a place of some little emolument at this moment, and Mr. Hicks had plenty on his hands besides his sister, who being the only English lady there, set the fashion of the place, and usurped all the attention of the gentlemen mariners, who occasionally came for bullocks. But Miss Hicks knew her own importance, and had successively refused three midshipmen, one master's mate, and an acting purser. African bullocks were plentiful at Te-

tuan, but English ladies were scarce; moreover, she had a pretty little fortune of her own, to wit, three hundred dollars in a canvas bag, left her by her father, and entirely at her own disposal. Miss Hicks was very like her brother, except that she was more dumpling in her figure, with flaxen hair; her features were rather pretty, and her skin very fair. As soon as the preliminaries had been entered into, and arrangements made in a small room with bare walls which Mr. Hicks denominated his office, they were asked to walk into the parlour to be introduced to the vice-consul's sister. Miss Hicks tossed her head at the two midshipmen, but smiled most graciously at Captain Hogg. She knew the relative ranks of midshipman and captain. After a short time she requested the honour of Captain Hogg's company to dinner, and begged that he would bring his midshipmen with him, at which Jack and Gascoigne looked at each

other and burst out in a laugh, and Miss Hicks was very near rescinding the latter part of her invitation. As soon as they were out of the house, they told the captain to go on board and get all ready whilst they walked round the town. Having peeped into every part of it, and stared at Arabs, Moors, and Jews, till they were tired, they proceeded to the landing-place, where they met the captain, who informed them that he had done nothing, because the men were all drunk with Jack's doubloon. Jack replied that a doubloon would not last for ever, and that the sooner they drank it out the better. They then returned to the vice-consul's, whom they requested to procure for them fifty dozen of fowls, twenty sheep, and a great many other articles, which might be obtained at the place; for as Jack said they would live well going up to Toulon, and if there were any of the stock left, they would give them to the admiral, for Jack had taken

the precaution to put his *father's philosophy* once more to the proof, before he quitted Mahon. As Jack gave such a liberal order, and the vice-consul cheated him out of at least one-third of what he paid, Mr. Hicks thought he could do no less then offer beds to our midshipmen as well as to Captain Hogg; so, as soon as dinner was over they ordered Captain Hogg to go on board and bring their things on shore, which he did. As the time usual for transports remaining at Tetuan before they could be completed with bullocks was three weeks, our midshipmen decided upon staying at least so long if they could find anything to do, or if they could not, doing nothing was infinitely preferable to doing duty. So they took up their quarters at the vice-consul's, sending for porter and other things which were not to be had but from the transport, and Jack, to prove that he was not a swindler, as Captain Tartar had called

him, gave Captain Hogg a hundred dollars on account, for Captain Hogg had a large stock of porter and English luxuries, which he had brought out as a venture, and of which he had still a considerable portion left. As, therefore, our midshipmen not only were cheated by the vice-consul but they also supplied his table, Mr. Hicks was very hospitable, and every thing was at their service except Miss Julia, who turned up her nose at a midshipman, even upon full pay; but she made great advances to the captain, who, on his part, was desperately in love: so the mate and the men made all ready for the bullocks, Jack and Gascoigne made themselves comfortable, and Captain Hogg made love, and thus passed the first week.

The chamber of Easy and Gascoigne was at the top of the house, and finding it excessively warm, Gascoigne had forced his way up to the flat roof above; (for the houses are all built in

that way in most Mahomedan countries, to enable the occupants to enjoy the cool of the evening, and sometimes to sleep there.) Those roofs where houses are built next to each other, are divided by a wall of several feet, to insure that privacy which the Mahomedan customs demand.

Gascoigne had not been long up there before he heard the voice of a female, singing a plaintive air in a low tone, on the other side of the wall. Gascoigne sang well himself, and having a very fine ear, he was pleased with the correctness of the notes, although he had never heard the air before. He leant against the wall, smoked his cigar, and listened. It was repeated again and again at intervals; Gascoigne soon caught the notes, which sounded so clear and pure in the silence of the night.

At last they ceased, and having waited another half hour in vain, our midshipman returned

to his bed, humming the air which had so pleased his ear. It haunted him during his sleep, and rang in his ears when he awoke, as it is well known any new air that pleases us will do. Before breakfast was ready, Gascoigne had put English words to it, and sang them over and over again. He inquired of the vice-consul who lived in the next house, and was answered, that it was an old Moor, who was reported to be wealthy, and to have a daughter, whom many of the people had asked in marriage, but whether for her wealth or for her beauty he could not tell; he had, however, heard that she was very handsome. Gascoigne made no further inquiries, but went out with Jack and Captain Hogg, and on board to see the water got in for the bullocks.

"Where did you pick up that air, Gascoigne? it is very pretty, but I never heard you sing it before."

Gascoigne told him, and also what he had heard from Mr. Hicks.

"I'm determined, Jack, to see that girl if I can. Hicks can talk Arabic fast enough; just ask him the Arabic for these words—'Don't be afraid—I love you—I cannot speak your tongue,' —and put them down on paper as they are pronounced."

Jack rallied Gascoigne upon his fancy, which could end in nothing.

"Perhaps not," replied Gascoigne; "and I should have cared nothing about it, if she had not sung so well. I really believe the way to my heart is through my ear;—however, I shall try to-night, and soon find if she has the feeling which I think she has. Now let us go back; I'm tired of looking at women in garments up to their eyes, and men in dirt up to their foreheads."

As they entered the house they heard an altercation between Mr. and Miss Hicks.

"I shall never give my consent, Julia; one of those midshipmen you turn your nose up at, is worth a dozen Hoggs."

"Now, if we only knew the price of a hog in this country," observed Easy; "we should be able to calculate our exact value, Ned."

"A hog being an unclean animal, is not——"

"Hush," said Jack.

"Mr. Hicks," replied Miss Julia, "I am mistress of myself and my fortune, and I shall do as I please."

"Depend upon it, you shall not, Julia. I consider it my duty to prevent you from making an improper match; and, as his majesty's representative here, I cannot allow you to marry this young man."

"Mercy on us!" said Gascoigne, "his majesty's representative!!"

"I shall not ask your consent," replied the lady.

"Yes, but you shall not marry without my consent. I have, as you know, Julia, from my situation here, as one of his majesty's *corps diplomatick*, great power, and I shall forbid the banns; in fact, it is only I who can marry you."

"Then I'll marry elsewhere."

"And what will you do on board of the transport until you are able to be married?"

"I shall do as I think proper," replied the lady; "and I'll thank you for none of your indelicate insinuations." So saying, the lady bounced out of the room into her own, and our midshipmen then made a noise in the passage, to intimate that they had come in. They found Mr. Hicks looking very red and vice-consular indeed, but he recovered himself; and Captain Hogg making *his* appearance, they went to dinner; but Miss Julia would not make *her* appearance, and Mr. Hicks was barely civil to

the captain, but he was soon afterwards called out, and our midshipmen went into the office to enable the two lovers to meet. They were heard then talking together, and after a time they said less, and their language was more tender.

"Let us see what's going on, Jack," said Gascoigne; and they walked softly so as to perceive the two lovers, who were too busy to be on the look out.

Captain Hogg was requesting a lock of his mistress's hair. The plump Julia could deny him nothing; she let fall her flaxen tresses and taking out her scissars cut off a thick bunch from her hair behind, which she presented to the captain; it was at least a foot and a half long and an inch in circumference. The captain took it in his immense hand and thrust it into his coat-pocket behind, but one thrust down to the bottom would not get it in, so he

thrust again and again, until it was all coiled away like a cable in a tier.

"That's a liberal girl," whispered Jack; "she gives by *wholesale* what it will take some time to *retail*. But here comes Mr. Hicks, let's give them warning; I like Hogg, and as she fancies pork, she shall have it, if I can contrive to help them."

That night Gascoigne went again on the roof, and after waiting some time, heard the same air repeated: he waited until it was concluded, and then, in a very low tone, sung it himself to the words he had arranged for it. For some time all was silent, and then the singing recommenced, but it was not to the same air. Gascoigne waited until the new air had been repeated several times, and then giving full scope to his fine tenor voice, sang the first air again. It echoed through the silence of the night air, and then he waited, but in vain; the soft voice

of the female was heard no more, and Gascoigne retired to rest.

This continued for three or four nights, Gascoigne singing the same airs the ensuing night that he had heard the preceding, until at last it appeared that the female had no longer any fear, but changed the airs so as to be amused with the repetition of them next evening. On the fifth night she sang the first air, and our midshipman responding, she then sang another, until she had sung them all, waiting each time for the response. The wall was not more than eight feet high, and Gascoigne now determined, with the assistance of Jack, to have a sight of his unknown songstress. He asked Captain Hogg to bring on shore some inch line, and he contrived to make a ladder with three or four poles which were up stairs, used for drying linen. He fixed them against the wall without noise, all ready for the evening. It was

a beautiful clear moonlight night, when he went up, accompanied by Jack. The air was again sung and repeated by Gascoigne, who then softly mounted the ladder, held by Jack, and raised his head above the wall; he perceived a young Moorish girl, splendidly dressed, half-lying on an ottoman, with her eyes fixed upon the moon, whose rays enabled him to observe that she was indeed beautiful. She appeared lost in contemplation; and Gascoigne would have given the world to have divined her thoughts. Satisfied with what he had seen, he descended, and singing one of the airs, he then repeated the words, "Do not be afraid—I love you—I cannot speak your language." He then sang another of the airs, and after he had finished he again repeated the words in Arabic; but there was no reply. He sang the third air, and again repeated the words, when, to his delight, he heard an answer in Lingua Franca.

"Can you speak in this tongue?"

"Yes," replied Gascoigne, "I can, Allah be praised. Be not afraid—I love you."

"I know you not; who are you? you are not of my people."

"No, but I will be any thing that you wish. I am a Frank and an English officer."

At this reply of Gascoigne there was a pause.

"Am I then despised?" said Gascoigne.

"No, not despised, but you are not of my people or of my land; speak no more, or you will be heard."

"I obey," replied Gascoigne; "since you wish it, but I shall pine till to-morrow's moon; I go to dream of you. Allah protect you!"

"How amazingly poetical you were in your language, Ned," said Easy, when they went down into their room.

"To be sure, Jack, I've read the Arabian

nights. You never saw such eyes in your life: what a houri she is!"

"Is she as handsome as Agnes, Ned?"

"Twice as handsome by moonlight."

"That's all moonshine, and so will be your courting, for it will come to nothing."

"Not if I can help it."

"Why, Gascoigne, what would you do with a wife?"

"Just exactly what you would do, Jack."

"I mean, my dear Ned, can you afford to marry?"

"Not while the old governor lives, but I know he has some money in the funds. He told me one day, that I could not expect more than three thousand pounds. You know I have sisters."

"And before you come into that you'll have three thousand children."

"That's a large family, Jack," replied Gas-

coigne, bursting out into laughter, in which our hero joined.

"Well, you know I only wanted to argue the point with you."

"I know that, Jack, but I think we're counting our chickens before they are hatched, which is foolish."

"In every other case except when we venture upon matrimony."

"Why, Jack, you're becoming quite sensible."

"My wisdom is for my friends, my folly for myself. Good night."

But Jack did not go to sleep. "I must not allow Gascoigne to do such a foolish thing," thought he—"marry a dark girl on midshipman's pay, if he succeeds,—get his throat cut if he does not." As Jack said, his wisdom was for his friends, and he was so generous that he reserved none for his own occasions.

Miss Julia Hicks, as we before observed, set the fashions at Tetuan, and her style of dress was not unbecoming. The Moorish women wore large veils, or they may be called what you will, for their head-dresses descend to their heels at times, and cover the whole body, leaving an eye to peep with, and hiding every thing else. Now Miss found this much more convenient than the bonnet, as she might walk out in the heat of the sun without burning her fair skin, and stare at everybody and everything without being stared at in return. She therefore never went out without one of these overalls, composed of several yards of fine muslin. Her dress in the house was usually of coloured sarcenet, for a small vessel came into the port one day during her father's lifetime, unloaded a great quantity of bales of goods with English marks; and as the vessel had gone out in ballast, there was a surmise on his part by what

means they came into the captain's possession. He therefore cited the captain up to the governor, but the affair was amicably arranged by the vice-consul receiving about one quarter of the cargo in bales of silks and muslins. Miss Hicks had therefore all her dresses of blue, green, and yellow sarcenet, which, with the white muslin overall, made her as conspicuous as the only Frankish lady in the town had a right to be, and there was not a dog which barked in Tetuan which did not know the sister of the vice-consul, although few had seen her face.

Now it occurred to Jack, as Gascoigne was determined to carry on his amour, that in case of surprise it would be as well if he dressed himself as Miss Hicks. He proposed it to Gascoigne the next morning, who approved of the idea, and in the course of the day, when Miss Hicks was busy with Captain Hogg, he con-

trived to abstract one of her dresses and muslin overalls —which he could do in safety, as there were plenty of them, for Miss Hicks was not troubled with mantua-maker's bills.

When Gascoigne went up on the roof the ensuing night, he put on the apparel of Miss Hicks, and looked very like her as far as figure went, although a little taller. He waited for the Moorish girl to sing, but she did not—so he crept up the ladder and looked over the wall—when he observed that she was reclining, as before, in deep thought.—His head covered with the muslin caught her eye, and she gave a faint scream.

"Fear not, lady," said Gascoigne, "it is not the first time that I have beheld that sweet face. I sigh for a companion. What would I not give to be sitting by your side? I am not of your creed, 'tis true—but does it therefore follow that we should not love each other?"

The Moorish girl was about to reply, when Gascoigne received an answer from a quarter whence he little expected it. It was from the Moor himself, who, hearing his daughter scream, had come swiftly up to the roof.

"Does the Frankish lily wish to mingle her perfumes with the dark violet?" said he, for he had often seen the sister of the vice-consul, and he imagined it was she who had come on the roof and ascended the wall to speak with his daughter.

Gascoigne had presence of mind to avail himself of this fortunate mistake.

"I am alone, worthy Moor," replied he, pulling the muslin more over his face, "and I pine for a companion. I have been charmed by the nightingale on the roof of your dwelling; but I thought not to meet the face of a man, when I took courage to climb this ladder."

"If the Frankish lily will have courage to

descend she can sit by the side of the dark violet."

Gascoigne thought it advisable to make no reply.

"Fear not," said the old Moor; "what is an old man but a woman?" and the Moor brought a ladder, which he placed against the wall.

After a pause, Gascoigne said, "It is my fate;" and he then descended, and was led by the Moor to the mattress upon which his daughter reclined. The Moor then took his seat near them, and they entered into conversation. Gascoigne knew quite enough of the vice-consul and his daughter to play his part—and he thought proper to tell the Moor that her brother wished to give her as a wife to the captain of the ship, whom she abhorred, and would take her to a cold and foggy climate; that she had been born here, and wished to live and die here,

and would prefer passing her life in his women's apartments, to leaving this country.—At which Abdel Faza, for such was his name, felt very amorous; he put his hands to his forehead, salaamed, and told Gascoigne that his zenana, and all that were in it, were hers as well as his house and himself. After an hour's conversation, in which Azar, his daughter, did not join, the old Moor asked Gascoigne to descend into the women's apartment—and observing his daughter's silence, said to her,

"Azar, you are angry that this Frankish houri should come to the apartments of which you have hitherto been sole mistress. Fear not, you will soon be another's, for Osman Ali has asked thee for his wife, and I have listened to his request."

Now Osman Ali was as old as her father, and Azar hated him. She offered her hand tremblingly, and led Gascoigne into the zenana.

The Moor attended them to the threshold, bowed, and left them.

That Gascoigne had time to press his suit, and that he did not lose such a golden opportunity may easily be imagined, and her father's communication relative to Osman Ali very much assisted our midshipman's cause.

He left the zenana, like most midshipmen, in love, that is, a little above quicksilver boiling heat. Jack, who had remained in a state of some suspense all this time, was not sorry to hear voices in an amicable tone, and in a few minutes afterwards he perceived that Gascoigne was ascending the ladder. It occurred to our hero that it was perhaps advisable that he should not be seen, as the Moor, in his gallantry, might come up the ladder with the supposed lady. He was right, for Abdel Faza not only followed her up the ladder on his side, but assisted her

to descend on the other, and with great ceremony took his leave.

Gascoigne hastened to Jack, who had been peeping, and gave him a detail of what had passed, describing Azar as the most beautiful, fascinating, and fond creature that ever was created. After half-an-hour's relation, he stopped short because he discovered that Jack was fast asleep.

The visits of Gascoigne were repeated every night; old Abdel Faza became every time more gallant, and our midshipman was under the necessity of assuming a virtue if he had it not. He pretended to be very modest.

In the meantime, Captain Hogg continued his attentions to the real Miss Hicks; the mate proceeded to get the bullocks on board, and as more than three weeks had already passed away, it was time to think of departing for Toulon;

but Captain Hogg was too much in love, and as for Gascoigne, he intended, like all midshipmen in love, to give up the service. Jack reasoned with the captain, who appeared to listen to reason, because Miss Hicks had agreed to follow his fortunes, and crown his transports in the transport Mary Ann. He therefore proposed that they should get away as fast as they could, and as soon as they had weighed the anchor, he would come on shore, take off Miss Hicks, and make all sail for Toulon.

Jack might have suffered this; the difficulty was with Gascoigne, who would not hear of going away without his lovely Azar. At last Jack planned a scheme which he thought would succeed, and which would be a good joke to tell the governor. He therefore appeared to consent to Gascoigne's carrying off his little Moor, and they canvassed how it was to be managed. Jack then told Gascoigne that he had hit upon

a plan which would succeed. "I find," said he, "from Captain Hogg, that he has an intention of carrying off Miss Hicks, and when I sounded him as to his having a lady with him, he objected to it immediately, saying, that he must have all the cabin to himself and his intended. Now, in the first place, I have no notion of giving up the cabin to Miss Hicks or Mrs. Hogg. It will be very uncomfortable to be shut out, because he wishes to make love; I therefore am determined that he shall not take off Miss Hicks. He has proposed to me that he shall go on board, and get the brig under weigh, leaving me with a boat on shore to sign the vouchers, and that Miss Hicks shall slip into the boat when I go off at dusk. Now I will not bring off Miss Hicks: if he wants to marry her, let him do it when I am not on board. I have paid for every thing, and I consider the cabin as mine.

"Look, you Ned, if you wish to carry off your little Moor there is but one way, and that is a very simple one: leave her a dress of Miss Hicks's when you go there to-morrow night, and tell her to slip down at dusk, and come out of the house: all the danger will be in her own house, for as soon as she is out, she will be supposed to be the vice-consul's sister, and will not be observed or questioned. I will look out for, and bring her on board instead of Miss Hicks. Hogg will have the brig under-weigh, and will be too happy to make all sail, and she shall lock the cabin inside, so that the mistake shall not be discovered till the next morning, and we shall have a good laugh at Captain Hogg."

Gascoigne pronounced that Jack's scheme was capital, and agreed to it, thanking him and declaring that he was the best friend that he ever had. "So I will be," thought Jack, "but you will

not acknowledge it at first." Jack then went to Captain Hogg and appeared to enter warmly into his views, but told him that Hicks suspected what was going on, and had told him so, at the same time declaring that he would not lose sight of his sister until after Hogg was on board.

"Now," says Jack, "you know you cannot do the thing by main force, so the best plan will be for you to go on board and get under weigh, leaving me to bring off Miss Hicks, when her brother will imagine all danger to be over."

"Many thanks, Mr. Easy," replied Captain Hogg; "it will be capital, and I'll arrange it all with my Sophy. How very kind of you!"

"But, Hogg, will you promise me secrecy?"

"Yes," replied the captain, "that Gascoigne is a very silly fellow, and wants to run away with a girl he has made acquaintance with here; and what do you think he has proposed? that

after the ship is under weigh, that I shall carry her off in the boat; and he has borrowed one of the dresses of Miss Hicks, that it may appear to be her. I have agreed to it, but as I am determined that he shall not commit such a folly, I shall bring off Miss Hicks instead; and observe, Hogg, he is that sort of wild fellow, that if he was to find that I had cheated him, he would immediately go on shore and be left behind; therefore we must hand Miss Hicks down in the cabin, and she will lock the door all night, so that he may not observe the trick till the next morning, and then we shall have a fine laugh at him."

Captain Hogg replied it would be an excellent joke, as Gascoigne did before him.

Now it must be observed that the water and the bullocks, and the sheep and fowls, were all on board; and Mr. Hicks having received his money from Jack, had very much altered his

manner; he was barely civil, for as he had got all he could out of our hero, he was anxious to get rid of him as well as of Captain Hogg. Our hero was very indignant at this, but as it would not suit his present views, pretended not to notice it—on the contrary, he professed the warmest friendship for the vice-consul, and took an opportunity of saying that he could not return his kindness in a better way than by informing him of the plot which had been arranged. He then told him of the intended escape of his sister, and that he was the person intended to bring her off.

"Infamous, by heavens!" cried the vice-consul; "I shall write to the foreign office on the subject."

"I think," said Jack, "it will be much better to do what I shall propose, which will end in a hearty laugh, and to the confusion of Captain Hogg. Do you dress yourself in your sister's

clothes, and I will bring you off instead of her. Let him imagine that he has your sister secure; I will hand you down to the cabin, and do you lock yourself in. He cannot sail without my orders, and I will not sign the vouchers. The next morning we will open the cabin door and have a good laugh at him. Desire your boat to be off at daylight to take you on shore, and I will then make him proceed to Toulon forthwith. It will be a capital joke."

So thought the vice-consul, as well as Gascoigne and Captain Hogg. He shook hands with Jack, and was as civil to him as before.

That night Gascoigne left one of Miss Hicks' many dresses with Azar, who agreed to follow his fortunes, and who packed up all the jewels and money she could lay her hands upon. Poor little child, she trembled with fear and delight. Miss Hicks smuggled, as she thought, a box of clothes on board, and in the box was her

fortune of three hundred dollars. Mr. Hicks laughed in his sleeve, so did Jack; and every one went to bed, with expectations that their wishes would be realized. After an early dinner Captain Hogg and Gascoigne went on board, both squeezing Jack's hand as if they were never to see him again, and looks of intelligence passed between all the parties.

As soon as they were out of the door the vice-consul chuckled, and Miss Hicks, who thought he chuckled at the idea of having rid himself of Captain Hogg, chuckled still more as she looked at our hero, who was her confidant; and our hero, for reasons known to the reader, chuckled more than either of them.

A little before dark, the boat was sent on shore from the brig, which was now under weigh, and Mr. Hicks, as had been agreed, said that he should go into the office and prepare the vouchers—that is, put on his sister's clothes.

Miss Hicks immediately rose, and wishing our hero a pleasant voyage, as had been agreed, said that she should retire for the night, as she had a bad head-ache—she wished her brother good night, and went into her room to wait another hour, when our hero, having shoved off the boat to deceive the vice-consul, was to return, meet her in the garden, and take her off to the brig. Our hero then went into the office and assisted the vice-consul, who took off all his own clothes and tied them up in a handkerchief, intending to resume them after he had gone into the cabin.

As soon as he was ready, Jack carried his bundle and led the supposed Miss Hicks down to the boat. They shoved off in a great hurry, and Jack took an opportunity of dropping Mr. Hicks' bundle overboard. As soon as they arrived alongside, Mr. Hicks ascended and was handed by Jack down into the cabin: he squeezed Jack's

hand as he entered, saying in a whisper, "To-morrow morning what a laugh we shall have!" and then he locked the door. In the mean time the boat was hooked on and hoisted up, and Jack took the precaution to have the dead lights lowered that Mr. Hicks might not be able to ascertain what was going on. Gascoigne came up to our hero and squeezed his hand.

"I'm so much obliged to you, Jack. I say, to-morrow morning what a laugh we shall have!"

As soon as the boat was up, and the main-yard filled, Captain Hogg also came up to our hero, shaking him by the hand and thanking him; and he too concluded by saying, "I say, Mr. Easy, to-morrow morning what a laugh we shall have!"

"Let those laugh who win," thought Jack.

The wind was fair, the watch was set, the course was steered, and all went down to their hammocks, and went to sleep, waiting for to-

morrow morning. Mr. Hicks, also, having nothing better to do, went to sleep, and by the morning dawn, the transport Mary Ann was more than a hundred miles from the African shore.

CHAPTER IX.

Our hero plays the very devil.

We must leave the reader to imagine the effect of the next morning's dénouement. Every one was in a fury except Jack, who did nothing but laugh. The captain wanted to return to obtain Miss Hicks, Gascoigne to obtain Azar, and the vice-consul to obtain his liberty—but the wind was foul for their return, and Jack soon gained the captain on his side. He pointed out to him that, in the first place, if he presumed to return, he would forfeit his charter bond; in the second, he would have to pay for all the bullocks which died; in the third, that if he wished to take

Miss Hicks as his wife, he must not first injure her character by having her on board before the solemnity; and lastly, that he could always go and marry her whenever he pleased; the brother could not prevent him. All this was very good advice, and the captain became quite calm and rational, and set his studding-sails below and aloft.

As for Gascoigne, it was no use reasoning with him, so it was agreed that he should have satisfaction as soon as they could get on shore again. Mr. Hicks was the most violent; he insisted that the vessel should return, while both Jack and the captain refused, although he threatened them with the whole foreign office. He insisted upon having his clothes, but Jack replied that they had tumbled overboard as they pulled from the shore. He then commanded the mate and men to take the vessel back, but they laughed at him and his woman's clothes. "At all

events, I'll have you turned out of the service," said he to our hero in his fury. "I shall be extremely obliged to you," said Jack—and captain Hogg was so much amused with the vice consul's appearance in his sister's clothes, that he quite forgot his own disappointment in laughing at his intended brother-in-law. He made friends again with Jack, who regained his ascendency, and ordered out the porter on the capstern-head. They had an excellent dinner, but Mr. Hicks refused to join them, which however did not spoil the appetite of Jack or the captain; as for Gascoigne, he could not eat a mouthful, but he drank to excess, looking over the rim of his tumbler as if he could devour our hero, who only laughed the more. Mr. Hicks had applied to the men to lend him some clothes, but Jack had foreseen that, and he was omnipotent. There was not a jacket or a pair of trousers to be had for love or money. Mr.

Hicks then considered it advisable to lower his tone, and he applied to Captain Hogg, who begged to be excused without he consented to his marriage with his sister, to which Mr. Hicks gave an indignant negative. He then applied to Gascoigne who told him in a very surly tone to go to h—ll. At last he applied to our hero, who laughed, and said that he would see him d—d first. So Mr. Hicks sat down in his petticoats and vowed revenge. Gascoigne, who had drunk much and eaten nothing, turned in and went to sleep—while Captain Hogg and our hero drank porter on the capstern. Thus passed the first day, and the wind was famously fair—the bullocks lowed, the cocks crew, the sheep baa'd, and the Mary Ann made upwards of two hundred miles. Jack took possession of the other berth in the cabin, and his majesty's representative was obliged to lie down in his petticoats upon a topsail which lay between decks,

with a bullock on each side of him, who every now and then made a dart at him with their horns, as if they knew that it was to him that they were indebted for their embarkation and being destined to drive the scurvy out of the Toulon fleet.

We cannot enter into the details of the passage, which, as the wind was fair, was accomplished in ten days without the loss of a bullock. During this time Mr. Hicks condescended to eat without speaking, imagining that the hour of retribution would come, when they joined the admiral. Gascoigne gradually recovered himself, but did not speak to our hero, who continued to laugh and drink porter. On the eleventh morning they were in the midst of the Toulon fleet, and Mr. Hicks smiled exultingly as he passed our hero in his petticoats, and wondered that Jack showed no signs of trepidation.

The fleet hove-to, Jack ran under the admi-

ral's stern, lowered down his boat and went on board, showed his credentials, and reported his bullocks. The general signal was made, there was a fair division of the spoil, and then the admiral asked our hero whether the master of the transport had any other stock on board. Jack replied that he had not; but that having been told by the governor of Malta that they might be acceptable, he had bought a few sheep and some dozen of fowls, which were much at his service, if he would accept of them. The admiral was much obliged to the governor, and also to Jack, for thinking of him, but would not, of course, accept of the stock without paying for them. He requested him to send all of them on board that he could spare, and then asked Jack to dine with him, for Jack had put on his best attire, and looked very much of a gentleman.

"Mr. Easy," said the flag-captain, who had

been looking at the transport with his glass, "is that the master's wife on board?"

"No, sir," replied Jack; "it's the vice-consul."

"What, in petticoats! the vice-consul?"

"Yes, the vice-consul of Tetuan. He came on board in that dress when the brig was under weigh, and I considered it my duty not to delay, being aware how very important it was that the fleet should be provided with fresh beef."

"What is all this, Mr. Easy?" said the admiral; "there has been some trick here. You will oblige me by coming into the cabin."

Easy followed the admiral and flag-captain into the cabin, and then boldly told the whole story how he tricked them all. It was impossible for either of them to help laughing, and when they began to laugh it was almost as impossible to stop.

"Mr. Easy," said the admiral at last, "I do

not altogether blame you; it appears that the captain of the transport would have delayed sailing because he was in love—and that Mr. Gascoigne would have staid behind because he was infatuated; independent of the ill-will against the English which would have been excited by the abduction of the girl. But I think you might have contrived to manage all that without putting the vice-consul in petticoats."

"I acted to the best of my judgment, sir," replied Jack very humbly.

"And altogether you have done well. Captain Malcolm, send a boat for the vice-consul."

Mr. Hicks was too impatient to tell his wrongs to care for his being in his sister's clothes: he came on board, and although the tittering was great, he imagined that it would soon be all in his favour, when it was known that he was a diplomatic. He told his story and waited for the decision of the admiral, which

was to crush our hero, who stood with the midshipmen on the lee-side of the deck; but the admiral replied, "Mr. Hicks, in the first place, this appears to me to be a family affair concerning the marriage of your sister, with which I have nothing to do. You went on board of your own free will in woman's clothes. Mr. Easy's orders were positive, and he obeyed them. It was his duty to sail as soon as the transport was ready. You may forward your complaint if you please, but, as a friend, I tell you that it will probably occasion your dismissal, for these kind of pranks are not understood at the foreign office. You may return to the transport, which, after she has touched at Mahon, will proceed again to Tetuan. The boat is alongside, sir."

Mr. Hicks, astonished at the want of respect paid to a vice-consul, shoved his petticoats between his legs and went down the side amidst the laughter of the whole of the ship's company. Our

hero dined with the admiral, and was well received. He got his orders to sail that night for Minorca, and as soon as dinner was over he returned on board, where he found Captain Hogg very busy selling his porter—Gascoigne walking the deck in a brown study—and Mr. Hicks solus abaft, sulking in his petticoats.

As soon as they were clear of the boats, the Mary Ann hoisted her ensign and made sail, and as all the porter was not yet sold, Jack ordered up a bottle.

Jack was much pleased with the result of his explanation with the admiral, and he felt that, for once, he had not only got into no scrape himself, but that he had prevented others. Gascoigne walked the deck gloomily; the fact was, that he was very unhappy; he had had time to reflect, and now that the first violence had subsided, he felt that our hero had done him a real service, and had prevented him from committing

an act of egregious folly; and yet he had summoned this friend to meet him in the field—and such had been his gratitude. He would have given the world to recall what had passed and to make friends, but he felt ashamed, as most people do, to acknowledge his error; he had, however, almost made up his mind to it, and was walking up and down thinking in what manner he might contrive it, when Jack, who was sitting, as usual, in a chair by the capstern, with his porter by him, said to himself, "Now I'll lay my life that Ned wants to make friends, and is ashamed to speak first; I may be mistaken, and he may fly off at a tangent, but even if I am, at all events, it will not be I who am wrong —I'll try him." Jack waited till Gascoigne passed him again, and then said, looking kindly and knowingly in his face,

"I say, Ned, will you have a glass of porter?"

Gascoigne smiled, and Jack held out his hand; the reconciliation was effected in a moment, and the subject of quarrel was not canvassed by either party.

"We shall be at Minorca in a day or two," replied Jack, after a while; "now I shall be glad to get there. Do you know, Ned, that I feel very much satisfied with myself; I have got into no scrape this time, and I shall, notwithstanding, have a good story to tell the governor when I go to Malta."

"Partly at my expense," replied Gascoigne.

"Why, you will figure a little in it, but others will figure much more."

"I wonder what has become of that poor girl," observed Gascoigne, who could not refrain from mentioning her; "what hurts me most is, that she must think me such a brute."

"No doubt of that, Ned,—take another glass of porter."

"Her father gave me this large diamond."

"The old goat—sell it, and drink his health with it."

"No, I'll keep it in memory of his daughter."

Here Gascoigne fell into a melancholy reverie, and Jack thought of Agnes.

In two days they arrived at Mahon, and found the Aurora already there, in command of Captain Wilson. Mr. Hicks had persuaded Captain Hogg to furnish him with clothes, Jack having taken off the injunction as soon as he had quitted the admiral. Mr. Hicks was aware that if the admiral would not listen to his complaint, it was no use speaking to a captain: so he remained on board a pensioner upon Captain Hogg, and after our midshipmen quitted the transport they became very good friends. Mr. Hicks consented to the match, and Captain Hogg was made happy. As for poor Azar, she had wandered about until she was tired, in Miss

Hicks' dress, and at last returned broken-hearted to her father's and was admitted by Abdel Faza himself; he imagined it was Miss Hicks, and was in transports—he discovered it was his daughter, and he was in a fury. The next day she went to the zenana of Osman Ali.

When Jack reported himself he did not tell the history of the elopements, that he might not hurt the feelings of Gascoigne. Captain Wilson was satisfied with the manner in which he had executed his orders, and asked him, "whether he preferred staying in the Harpy, or following him into the Aurora."

Jack hesitated.

"Speak frankly, Mr. Easy; if you prefer Captain Sawbridge to me, I shall not be affronted."

"No, sir," replied Easy, "I do not prefer Captain Sawbridge to you; you have both been equally kind to me, but I prefer you. But the

fact is, sir, that I do not much like to part with Gascoigne, or ——"

"Or who?" said the captain, smiling.

"With Mesty, sir, you may think me very foolish—but I should not be alive at this moment, if it had not been for him."

"I do not consider gratitude to be foolish, Mr. Easy," replied Captain Wilson. "Mr. Gascoigne, I intend to take with me, if he chooses to come, as I have a great respect for his father, and no fault to find with him, that is, generally speaking—but as for Mesty—why he is a good man, and as you have behaved yourself very well, perhaps I may think of it."

The next day Mesty was included among the boat's crew taken with him, by Captain Wilson, according to the regulations of the service, and appointed to the same situation under the master at arms of the Aurora. Gascoigne and our hero were also discharged into the frigate.

As our hero never has shown any remarkable predilection for duty, the reader will not be surprised at his requesting from Captain Wilson a few days on shore, previous to his going on board of the Aurora. Captain Wilson allowed the same license to Gascoigne, as they had both been cooped up for some time on board of a transport. Our hero took up his quarters at the only respectable hotel in the town, and whenever he could meet an officer of the Aurora, he very politely begged the pleasure of his company to dinner. Jack's reputation had gone before him, and the midshipmen drank his wine and swore he was a trump. Not that Jack was to be deceived, but upon the principles of equality, he argued that it was the duty of those who could afford dinners to give them to those who could not. This was a sad error on Jack's part, but he had not yet learnt the value of money; he was such a fool as to think that the

only real use of it was to make other people happy. It must, however, be offered in his extenuation that he was a midshipman and a philosopher, and not yet eighteen.

At last Jack had remained so long on shore, keeping open house, and the first lieutenant of the Aurora found the officers so much more anxious for leave, now that they were at little or no expense, that he sent him a very polite message, requesting the pleasure of his company on board that evening. Jack returned an equally polite answer, informing the first lieutenant that not being aware that he wished to see him, he had promised to accompany some friends to a masquerade that night, but that he would not fail to pay his respects to him the next day. The first lieutenant admitted the excuse, and our hero, after having entertained half-a-dozen of the Auroras, for the Harpy had sailed two days before, dressed himself for the masquerade,

which was held in a church about two miles and a half from Mahon.

Jack had selected the costume of the *devil*, as being the most appropriate, and mounting a jackass, he rode down in his dress to the masquerade. But, as Jack was just going in, he perceived a yellow carriage, with two footmen in gaudy liveries, draw up, and, with his usual politeness, when the footmen opened the door, offered his arm to hand out a fat old dowager covered with diamonds; the lady looked up, and perceiving Jack covered with hair, with his trident and his horns, and long tail, gave a loud scream, and would have fallen had it not been for Captain Wilson, who, in his full uniform, was coming in and caught her in his arms: while the old lady thanked him, and Captain Wilson bowed, Jack hastily retreated. "I shall make no conquests to-night," thought he, so he entered the church, and joined the crowd; but

it was so dense that it was hardly possible to move, and our hero soon got tired of flourishing his trident, and sticking it into people, who wondered what the devil he meant.

"This is stupid work," thought Jack, "I may have more fun outside:" so Jack put on his cloak, left the masquerade, and went out in search of adventures. He walked into the open country, about half a mile, until he came to a splendid house, standing in a garden of orange-trees, which he determined to reconnoitre. He observed that a window was open and lights were in the room; and he climbed up to the window, and just opened the white curtain and looked in. On a bed lay an elderly person, evidently dying, and by the side of the bed were three priests, one of whom held the crucifix in his hand, another the censor, and a third was sitting at a table with a paper, pen, and ink. As Jack understood Spanish, he listened, and heard one of the priests say,

"Your sins have been enormous, my son, and I cannot give you extreme unction or absolution unless you make some amends."

"I have," answered the moribund, "left money for ten thousand masses to be said for my soul."

"Five hundred thousand masses are not sufficient: how have you gained your enormous wealth? by usury and robbing the poor."

"I have left a thousand dollars to be distributed among the poor on the day of my funeral."

"One thousand dollars is nothing—you must leave all your property to holy church."

"And my children!" replied the dying man, faintly.

"What are your children compared to your salvation?—reply not: either consent, or not only do I refuse you the consolations of the dying, but I excommunicate——"

"Mercy, holy father—mercy!" said the old man, in a dying voice.

"There is no mercy, you are damned for ever and ever. Amen. Now hear: *excommunicabo te* ——"

"Stop—stop—have you the paper ready?"

"'Tis here, all ready, by which you revoke all former wills, and endow the holy church with your property. We will read it, for God forbid that it should be said that the holy church received an involuntary gift."

"I will sign it," replied the dying man; "but my sight fails me; be quick, absolve me." And the paper was signed, with difficulty, as the priests supported the dying man. "And now—absolve me."

"I do absolve thee," replied the priest, who then went through the ceremony.

"Now this is a confounded rascally business," said Jack to himself; who then dropped

his cloak, jumped upon the window-cill, opened wide the window-curtains with both hands, and uttered a yelling kind of "ha! ha! ha! ha!"

The priests turned round, saw the demon, as they imagined—dropped the paper on the table, and threw themselves with their faces on the floor.

"*Exorciso te,*" stammered one.

"Ha! ha! ha! ha!" repeated Jack, entering the room, and taking up the paper which he burnt by the flame of the candle. Our hero looked at the old man on the bed; his jaw had fallen, his eyes were turned. He was dead. Jack then gave one more "ha! ha! ha! ha!" to keep the priests in their places, blew out the candles, made a spring out of the window, caught up his cloak, and disappeared as fast as his legs could carry him.

Jack ran until he was out of breath, and then he stopped, and sat down by the side of the

road. It was broad moonlight, and Jack knew not where he was: "but Minorca has not many high roads," thought Jack, "and I shall find my way home. Now, let me see, I have done some good this evening. I have prevented those rogues from disinheriting a family. I wonder who they are; they ought to be infinitely obliged to me. But if the priests find me out, what shall I do? I never dare come on shore again—they'd have me in the inquisition. I wonder where I am," said Jack, "I will get on that hill, and see if I can take a departure."

The hill was formed by the road being cut perpendicularly almost through it, and was perhaps some twelve or fourteen feet high. Jack ascended it, and looked about him. "There is the sea, at all events, with the full moon silvering the waves," said Jack, turning from the road, "and here is the road; then that must be the way to Port Mahon. But what comes

here?—it's a carriage. Why it's the yellow carriage of that old lady with her diamonds and her two splashy footmen!" Jack was watching it as it passed the road under him, when, of a sudden, he perceived about a dozen men rush out, and seize the horses' heads,—a discharge of fire-arms, the coachman dropt off the box, and the two footmen dropt from behind. The robbers then opened the door and were hauling out the fat old lady covered with diamonds. Jack thought a second—it occurred to him, that, although he could not cope with so many, he might frighten them, as he had frightened one set of robbers already that night. The old lady had just been tumbled out of the carriage-door, like a large bundle of clothes tied up for the wash, when Jack, throwing off his cloak, and advancing to the edge of the precipice, with the full moon behind him throwing out his figure in strong relief, raised his trident, and just as they

were raising their knives, yelled a most unearthly "ha, ha, ha, ha!" The robbers looked up, and forgetting the masquerade, for there is a double tremor in guilt, screamed with fear; most of them ran away, and dropped after a hundred yards, others remained paralyzed and insensible. Jack descended the hill, went to the assistance of the old lady, who had swooned, and had to put her into the carriage; but although our hero was very strong, this was a work of no small difficulty. After one or two attempts, he lowered down the steps, and contrived to bump her on the first, from the first he purchased her on to the second, and from the second he at last seated her at the door of the carriage. Jack had no time to be over-polite; he then threw her back into the bottom of the carriage, her heels went up to the top, Jack shoved in her petticoats as fast as he could, for decency, and then shutting the door, seized the

reins, and jumped upon the box. "I don't know the way," thought Jack, "but we must needs go when the *devil drives;* so sticking his trident into the horses, they set off at a rattling pace, passing over the bodies of the two robbers, who had held the reins, and who both lay before him in a swoon. As soon as he had brought the horses into a trot, he slackened the reins, for, as Jack wisely argued, they will be certain to go home if I let them have their own way. The horses, before they arrived at the town, turned off, and stopped at a large country house. That he might not frighten the people, Jack had put on his cloak, and taken off his mask and head-piece, which he had laid beside him on the box. At the sound of the carriage-wheels the servants came out, when Jack, in few words, told them what had happened. Some of the servants ran in, and a young lady made her appearance, while the others were helping

the old lady out of the carriage, who had recovered her senses, but had been so much frightened that she had remained in the posture in which Jack had put her.

As soon as she was out, Jack descended from the coach-box and entered the house. He stated to the young lady what had taken place, and how opportunely he had frightened away the robbers, just as they were about to murder her relation; and also suggested the propriety of sending after the servants who had fallen in the attack, which was immediately done by a strong and well-armed party collected for the occasion. Jack having made his speech, made a very polite bow and took his leave, stating that he was an English officer, belonging to a frigate in the harbour. He knew his way back, and in half an hour was again at the inn, and found his comrades. Jack thought it advisable to keep his own secret, and therefore merely

said, that he had taken a long walk in the country; and soon afterwards went to bed.

The next morning our hero, who was always a man of his word, packed up his portmanteau, and paid his bill. He had just completed this heavy operation, when somebody wanted to speak to him, and a sort of half-clerical, half-legal sort of looking gentleman was introduced, who, with a starch face and prim air, said that he came to request in writing the name of the officer who was dressed as a devil, in the masquerade of the night before.

Jack looked at his interrogator, and thought of the priests and the inquisition. "No, no," thought he, "that won't do; a name I must give, but it shall be one that you dare not meddle with. A midshipman you might get hold of, but it's more than the whole island dare to touch a post-captain of one of his majesty's frigates. So Jack took the paper and wrote

Captain Henry Wilson, of his majesty's ship Aurora.

The prim man made a prim bow, folded up the paper, and left the room.

Jack threw the waiter half a doubloon, lighted his cigar, and went on board.

CHAPTER X.

In which the old proverb is illustrated, "That you must not count your chickens before they are hatched."

The first lieutenant of the Aurora was a very good officer in many respects, but, as a midshipman, he had contracted the habit of putting his hands in his pockets and could never keep them out, even when the ship was in a gale of wind; and hands are of some use in a heavy lurch. He had more than once received serious injury from falling on these occasions, but habit was too powerful; and, although he had once broken his leg by falling down the hatchway, and had moreover a large scar on his forehead, received

from being thrown to leeward against one of the guns, he still continued the practice; indeed, it was said that once, when it was necessary for him to go aloft, he had actually taken the two first rounds of the Jacob's ladder without withdrawing them, until losing his balance, he discovered that it was not quite so easy to go aloft with his hands in his pockets. In fact, there was no getting up his hands, even when all hands were turned up. He had another peculiarity, which was, that he had taken a peculiar fancy to a quack medicine, called Enouy's Universal Medicine for all Mankind; and Mr. Pottyfar was convinced in his own mind that the label was no libel, except from the greatness of its truth. In his opinion, it cured every thing, and he spent one of his quarterly bills every year in bottles of this stuff; which he not only took himself every time he was unwell, but occasionally when quite well, to

prevent his falling sick. He recommended it to every body in the ship, and nothing pleased him so much, as to give a dose of it to every one who could be persuaded to take it. The officers laughed at him, but it was generally behind his back, for he became very angry if contradicted upon this one point, upon which he certainly might be considered to be a little cracked. He was indefatigable in making proselytes to his creed, and expatiated upon the virtues of the medicine for an hour running, proving the truth of his assertions by a pamphlet, which, with his hands, he always carried in his trousers' pocket.

Jack reported himself when he came on board, and Mr. Pottyfar, who was on the quarter-deck at the time, expressed a hope that Mr. Easy would take his share of the duty, now that he had had such a spell on shore; to which Jack very graciously acceded, and then

went down below, where he found Gascoigne and his new messmates, with most of whom he was already acquainted.

"Well, Easy," said Gascoigne, "have you had enough of the shore?"

"Quite," replied Jack, recollecting that after the events of the night before, he was just as well on board; "I don't intend to ask for any more leave."

"Perhaps it's quite as well, for Mr. Pottyfar is not very liberal on that score, I can tell you; there is but one way of getting leave from him."

"Indeed," replied Jack; "and what is that?"

"You must pretend that you are not well, take some of his quack medicine, and then he will allow you a run on shore to work it off."

"Oh! that's it, is it? well then, as soon as we anchor in Valette, I'll go through a regular course, but not till then."

"It ought to suit you, Jack; it's an equality medicine; cures one disorder just as well as the other."

"Or kills—which levels all the patients. You're right, Gascoigne, I must patronize that stuff—for more reasons than one. Who was that person on deck in mufti?"

"The mufti, Jack? In other words, the chaplain of the ship; but he's a prime sailor, nevertheless."

"How's that?"

"Why he was brought up on the quarter-deck, served his time, was acting lieutenant for two years, and then, somehow or another, he bore up for the church."

"Indeed—what were his reasons?"

"No one knows—but they say he has been unhappy ever since."

"Why so?"

"Because he did a very foolish thing, which

cannot now be remedied. He supposed at the time that he would make a good parson, and now that he has long got over his fit, he finds himself wholly unfit for it—he is still the officer in heart, and is always struggling with his natural bent, which is very contrary to what a parson should feel."

"Why don't they allow parsons to be broke by a court-martial, and turned out of the service, or to resign their commissions, like other people?"

"It won't do, Jack—they serve Heaven—there's a difference between that and serving his majesty."

"Well, I don't understand these things. When do we sail?"

"The day after to-morrow."

"To join the fleet off Toulon?"

"Yes; but I suppose we shall be driven on

the Spanish coast going there. I never knew a man-of-war that was not."

"No; wind always blows from the south, going up the Mediterranean."

"Perhaps you'll take another prize, Jack—mind you don't go away without the articles of war."

"I won't go away without Mesty, if I can help it. O dear, how abominable a midshipman's berth is after a long run on shore! I positively must go on deck and look at the shore, if I can do nothing else."

"Why, ten minutes ago you had had enough of it?"

"Yes, but ten minutes here has made me feel quite sick. I shall go to the first lieutenant for a dose."

"I say, Easy, we must both be physicked on the same day."

"To be sure; but stop till we get to Malta."

Jack went on deck, made acquaintance with the chaplain and some of the officers whom he had not known, then climbed up into the maintop, where he took a seat on the armolest, and, as he looked at the shore, thought over the events that had passed, until Agnes came to his memory, and he thought only of her. When a mid is in love, he always goes aloft to think of the object of his affection; why, I don't know, except that his reverie is not so likely to be disturbed by an order from a superior officer.

The Aurora sailed on the second day, and with a fine breeze, stood across, making as much northing as easting; the consequence was, that one fine morning they saw the Spanish coast before they saw the Toulon fleet. Mr. Pottyfar took his hands out of his pockets, because he could not examine the coast through a telescope without so doing; but this, it is said, was the first time that he had done so on the quar-

ter-deck from the day that the ship had sailed from Port Mahon. Captain Wilson was also occupied with his telescope, so were many of the officers and midshipmen, and the men at the mast-heads used their eyes, but there was nothing but a few small fishing-boats to be seen. So they all went down to breakfast, as the ship was hove-to close in with the land.

"What will Easy bet," said one of the midshipmen, "that we don't see a prize to-day?"

"I will not bet that we do not see a vessel—but I'll bet you what you please, that we do not take one before twelve o'clock at night."

"No, no, that won't do—just let the tea-pot travel over this way, for it's my forenoon watch."

"It's a fine morning," observed one of the mates, of the name of Martin; "but I've a notion it won't be a fine evening."

"Why not?" inquired another.

"I've now been eight years in the Mediter-

ranean, and know something about the weather. There's a watery sky, and the wind is very steady. If we are not under double reefed topsails to-night, say I'm no conjuror."

"That you will be, all the same, if we are under bare poles," said another.

"You're devilish free with your tongue, my youngster.—Easy, pull his ears for me."

"Pull them easy, Jack, then," said the boy, laughing.

"All hands make sail!" now resounded at the hatchways.

"There they are, depend upon it," cried Gascoigne, catching up his hat and bolting out of the berth, followed by all the others except Martin, who had just been relieved, and thought that his presence in the waist might be dispensed with for the short time, at least, which it took him to swallow a cup of tea.

It was very true; a galliot and four lateen

vessels had just made their appearance round the easternmost point, and, as soon as they observed the frigate, had hauled their wind. In a minute the Aurora was under a press of canvas, and the telescopes were all directed to the vessels.

"All deeply laden, sir," observed Mr. Hawkins, the chaplain; "how the topsail of the galliot is scored!"

"They have a fresh breeze just now," observed Captain Wilson to the first lieutenant.

"Yes, sir, and it's coming down fast."

"Hands by the royal haulyards, there."

The Aurora careened with the canvas to the rapidly increasing breeze.

"Top-gallant sheet and haulyards."

"Luff you may, quarter master; luff, I tell you. A small pull of that weather main-top-gallant brace — that will do," said the master.

"Top-men, aloft there;—stand by to clue

up the royals—and, Captain Wilson, shall we take them in ?—I'm afraid of that pole—it bends now like a coach-whip," said Mr. Pottyfar, looking up aloft, with his hands in both pockets.

" In royals—lower away."

" They are going about, sir," said the second lieutenant, Mr. Haswell.

" Look out," observed the chaplain, " it's coming."

Again the breeze increases, and the frigate was borne down.

" Hands reef topsails in stays, Mr. Pottyfar."

" Aye, aye, sir—'bout ship."

The helm was put down and the top-sails lowered and reefed in stays.

" Very well, my lads, very well indeed," said Captain Wilson.

Again the topsails were hoisted and top-gallant sheets home. It was a strong breeze although the water was smooth, and the Aurora

dashed through at the rate of eight miles an hour, with her weather leeches lifting.

"Didn't I tell you so?" said Martin to his messmates on the gangway; "but there's more yet, my boys."

"We must take the top-gallant sails off her," said Captain Wilson, looking aloft—for the frigate now careened to her bearings, and the wind was increasing and squally. "Try them a little longer;" but another squall came suddenly—the haulyards were lowered and the sails clewed up and furled.

In the mean time the frigate had rapidly gained upon the vessels, which still carried on every stitch of canvas, making short tacks in shore. The Aurora was again put about with her head towards them, and they were not two points on her weather bow. The sky, which had been clear in the morning, was now overcast, the sun was obscured with opaque white clouds, and the sea

was rising fast. Another ten minutes, and then they were under double reefed top-sails, and the squalls were accompanied with heavy rain. The frigate now dashed through the waves, foaming in her course and straining under the press of sail. The horizon was so thick that the vessels ahead were no longer to be seen.

"We shall have it, I expect," said Captain Wilson.

"Didn't I say so?" observed Martin to Gascoigne. "We take no prizes this day, depend upon it."

"We must have another hand to the wheel, sir, if you please," said the quarter-master, who was assisting the helmsman.

Mr. Pottyfar, with his hands concealed as usual, stood by the capstern. "I fear, sir, we cannot carry the main-sail much longer."

"No," observed the chaplain, "I was thinking so."

"Captain Wilson, if you please, we are very close in," said the master; "don't you think we had better go about?"

"Yes, Mr. Jones.—Hands about ship—and—yes, by heavens, we must!—up mainsail."

The mainsail was taken off, and the frigate appeared to be immediately relieved. She no longer jerked and plunged as before.

"We're very near the land, Captain Wilson; thick as it is, I think I can make out the loom of it—shall we wear round, sir?" continued the master.

"Yes,—hands, wear ship—put the helm up."

It was but just in time, for, as the frigate flew round, describing a circle, as she payed off before the wind, they could perceive the breakers lashing the precipitous coast, not two cables' length from them.

"I had no idea we were so near," observed

the captain, compressing his lips—"Can they see any thing of those vessels?"

"I have not seen them this quarter-of-an-hour, sir," replied the signal-man, protecting his glass from the rain under his jacket.

"How's her head now, quarter-master?"

"South-south-east, sir."

The sky now assumed a different appearance—the white clouds had been exchanged for others dark and murky, the wind roared at intervals, and the rain came down in torrents. Captain Wilson went down into the cabin to examine the barometer.

"The barometer has risen," said he on his return on deck. "Is the wind steady?"

"No, sir, she's up and off three points."

"This will end in a south-wester."

The wet and heavy sails now flapped from the shifting of the wind.

"Up with the helm, quarter-master."

"Up it is—she's off to south-by-west."

The wind lulled, the rain came down in a deluge—for a minute it was quite calm, and the frigate was on an even keel.

"Man the braces. We shall be taken aback directly, depend upon it."

The braces were hardly stretched along before this was the case. The wind flew round to the south-west with a loud roar, and it was fortunate that they were prepared—the yards were braced round, and the master asked the captain what course they were to steer.

"We must give it up," observed Captain Wilson, holding on by the belaying pin. "Shape our course for Cape Sicie, Mr. Jones."

And the Aurora flew before the gale, under her fore-sail and top-sails close reefed. The weather was now so thick that nothing could be observed twenty yards from the vessel; the thun-

der pealed, and the lightning darted in every direction over the dark expanse. The watch was called as soon as the sails were trimmed, and all who could, went below, wet, uncomfortable, and disappointed.

"What an old Jonah you are, Martin," said Gascoigne.

"Yes, I am," replied he; "but we have the worst to come yet, in my opinion. I recollect, not two hundred miles from where we are now, we had just such a gale in the Favourite, and we as nearly went down, when——"

At this moment a tremendous noise was heard above, a shock was felt throughout the whole ship, which trembled fore and aft as if it was about to fall into pieces; loud shrieks were followed by plaintive cries, the lower deck was filled with smoke, and the frigate was down on her beam ends. Without exchanging a word, the whole of the occupants of the berth flew out, and were

up the hatchway, not knowing what to think, but convinced that some dreadful accident had taken place.

On their gaining the deck it was at once explained; the foremast of the frigate had been struck by lightning, had been riven into several pieces, and had fallen over the larboard bow, carrying with it the main topmast and jib-boom. The jagged stump of the foremast was in flames and burnt brightly, notwithstanding the rain fell in torrents. The ship, as soon as the foremast and main topmast had gone overboard, broached-to furiously, throwing the men over the wheel and dashing them senseless against the carronades; the forecastle, the fore part of the main deck, and even the lower deck, weres pread with men either killed or seriously wounded, or insensible from the electric shock. The frigate was on her beam ends and the sea broke furiously over her: all was dark as pitch, except the light from the

blazing stump of the foremast, appearing like a torch, held up by the wild demons of the storm, or when occasionally the gleaming lightning cast a momentary glare, threatening every moment to repeat its attack upon the vessel, while the deafening thunder burst almost on their devoted heads. All was dismay and confusion for a minute or two: at last Captain Wilson, who had himself lost his sight for a short time, called for the carpenter and axes—they climbed up, that is, two or three of them, and he pointed to the mizen-mast; the master was also there, and he cut loose the axes for the seamen to use; in a few minutes the mizen-mast fell over the quarter, and the helm being put hard up, the frigate payed off and slowly righted. But the horror of the scene was not yet over. The boatswain, who had been on the forecastle, had been led below, for his vision was gone for ever. The men who lay scattered about, had been ex-

amined, and they were assisting them down to the care of the surgeon, when the cry of "Fire!" issued from the lower deck. The ship had taken fire at the coal-hole and carpenter's store-room, and the smoke that now ascended was intense.

"Call the drummer," said Captain Wilson, "and let him beat to quarters—all hands to their stations—let the pumps be rigged and the buckets passed along. Mr. Martin, see that the wounded men are taken down below. Where's Mr. Haswell? Mr. Pottyfar, station the men to pass the water on by hand on the lower deck. I will go there myself. Mr. Jones, take charge of the ship."

Pottyfar, who actually had taken his hands out of his pockets, hastened down to comply with the captain's orders on the main deck, as Captain Wilson descended to the deck below.

"I say, Jack, this is very different from this morning," observed Gascoigne.

"Yes," replied Jack, "so it is; but I say, Gascoigne, what's the best thing to do?—when the chimney's on fire on shore, they put a wet blanket over it."

"Yes," replied Gascoigne; "but when the coal-hole's on fire on board, they will not find that sufficient."

"At all events, wet blankets must be a good thing, Ned, so let us pull out the hammocks; cut the lanyards and get some out—we can but offer them, you know, and if they do no good, at least it will show our zeal."

"Yes, Jack, and I think when they turn in again, those whose blankets you take will agree with you, that zeal makes the service very uncomfortable. However, I think you are right."

The two midshipmen collected three or four hands, and in a very short time they had more blankets than they could carry—there was no trouble in wetting them, for the main-deck was

afloat—and followed by the men they had collected, Easy and Gascoigne went down with large bundles in their arms to where Captain Wilson was giving directions to the men.

"Excellent, Mr. Easy! excellent, Mr. Gascoigne!" said Captain Wilson. "Come, my lads, throw them over now, and stamp upon them well;" the men's jackets and the captain's coat had already been sacrificed to the same object.

Easy called the other midshipmen, and they went up for a further supply; but there was no occasion, the fire had been smothered; still the danger had been so great that the fore magazine had been floated. During all this, which lasted perhaps a quarter-of-an-hour, the frigate had rolled gunnel under, and many were the accidents which occurred. At last, all danger from fire had ceased, and the men were ordered to return to their quarters, when three officers and forty-seven men were found absent—seven of

them were dead, most of them were already under the care of the surgeon, but some were still lying in the scuppers.

No one had been more active or more brave during this time of danger, than Mr. Hawkins the chaplain. He was everywhere, and when Captain Wilson went down to put out the fire he was there encouraging the men and exerting himself most gallantly. He and Mesty came aft when all was over, one just as black as the other. The chaplain sat down and wrung his hands—"God forgive me!" said he, "God forgive me!"

"Why so, sir?" said Easy, who stood near, "I am sure you need not be ashamed of what you have done."

"No, no, not ashamed of what I've done; but, Mr. Easy—I have sworn so, sworn such oaths at the men in my haste—I, the chaplain! God forgive me!—I meant nothing." It was

very true that Mr. Hawkins had sworn a great deal during his exertions, but he was at that time the quarter-deck officer and not the chaplain; the example to the men and his gallantry had been most serviceable.

"Indeed, sir," said Easy, who saw that the chaplain was in great tribulation, and hoped to pacify him, "I was certainly not there all the time, but I only heard you say, 'God bless you, my men! be smart,' and so on; surely, that is swearing."

"Was it *that* I said, Mr. Easy, are you sure? I really had an idea that I had d——d them all in heaps, as some of them deserved—no, no, not deserved. Did I really bless them—nothing but bless them?"

"Yes, sir," said Mesty, who perceived what Jack wanted; "it was nothing, I assure you, but 'God bless you, Captain Wilson!—Bless your

heart, my good men !—Bless the king ! and so on. You do noting but shower down blessing and wet blanket."

" I told you so," said Jack.

" Well, Mr. Easy, you've made me very happy," replied the chaplain; " I was afraid it was otherwise."

So indeed it was, for the chaplain had sworn like a boatswain; but, as Jack and Mesty had turned all his curses into blessings, the poor man gave himself absolution, and shaking hands with Jack, hoped he would come down into the gun-room and take a glass of grog; nor did he forget Mesty, who received a good allowance at the gun-room door, to which Jack gladly consented, as the rum in the middy's berth had all been exhausted after the rainy morning—but Jack was interrupted in his third glass, by somebody telling him the captain wanted to speak with Mr. Hawkins and with him.

Jack went up, and found the captain on the quarter deck with the officers.

"Mr. Easy," said Captain Wilson, "I have sent for you, Mr. Hawkins, and Mr. Gascoigne, to thank you on the quarter deck, for your exertions and presence of mind on this trying occasion." Mr. Hawkins made a bow, Gascoigne said nothing, but he thought of having extra leave when they arrived at Malta. Jack felt inclined to make a speech, and began something about when there was danger that it levelled every one to an equality even on board of a man-of-war.

"By no means, Mr. Easy," replied Captain Wilson, "it does the very contrary, for it proves which is the best man, and those who are the best raise themselves at once above the rest."

Jack was very much inclined to argue the point, but he took the compliment and held his tongue, which was the wisest thing he could

have done; so he made his bow, and was about to go down into the midshipmen's berth when the frigate was pooped by a tremendous sea, which washed all those who did not hold on down into the waist. Jack was among the number, and naturally catching at the first object which touched him, he caught hold of the chaplain by the leg, who commenced swearing most terribly, but before he could finish the oath, the water which had burst into the cabin through the windows—for the dead lights, in the confusion, had not yet been shipped—burst out the cross bulkheads, sweeping like a torrent the marine, the the cabin-door, and every thing else in its force, and floating Jack and the chaplain with several others down the main hatchway on to the lower deck. The lower deck being also full of water, men and chests were rolling and tossing about, and Jack was sometimes in company with the chaplain, and at others times separated;

at last they both recovered their legs, and gained the midshipmen's berth, which although afloat was still a haven of security. Mr. Hawkins spluttered and spit, and so did Jack, until he began to laugh.

"This is very trying, Mr. Easy," said the chaplain; "very trying indeed to the temper. I hope I have not sworn—I hope not."

"Not a word," said Jack—"I was close to you all the time—you only said, 'God preserve us!'"

"Only that? I was afraid that I said 'God d—n it!'"

"Quite a mistake, Mr. Hawkins. Let's go into the gun-room and try to wash this salt water out of our mouths, and then I will tell you all you said, as far as I could hear it, word for word."

So Jack by this means got another glass of grog, which was very acceptable in his wet

condition, and made himself very comfortable, while those on deck were putting on the dead lights, and very busy setting the goose wings of the main-sail to prevent the frigate from being pooped a second time.

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